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New York

President: Mr. Essy . . . . . (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.15 p.m.

Agenda item 9 *(continued)*

General debate

The President *(interpretation from French):* The first speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Tunisia, Mr. Habib Ben Yahia.

Mr. Ben Yahia (Tunisia) *(interpretation from Arabic):* It is my pleasure to convey to you, Mr. President, the text of the letter I have been charged by President Zein El Abidine Ben Ali, President of the Republic of Tunisia and the current Chairman of the Organization of African Unity to read to the General Assembly on his behalf. The President would have liked to deliver this speech himself, but for reasons beyond his control he is unable to do so. I shall therefore read his speech to the Assembly.

"I have the pleasure, first of all, to extend to you, Mr. President, my warmest congratulations on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Your election does honour both to the entire African continent and to our sister country, Côte d'Ivoire, and is also a well-deserved tribute to your excellent reputation. We are confident that your vast experience and outstanding qualities will be the best guarantee of the success of the work of the session.

"It is also a pleasure for me to reiterate my warmest congratulations to your august Assembly and to assure you of the great importance that Tunisia attaches to the laudable and sometimes exhausting efforts which the United Nations continues to deploy in the service of peace and in laying the foundations of constructive dialogue between nations.

"Tunisia, which has opted for dialogue as a means of conducting both its domestic and its foreign policies, can only support this approach, contribute to its consolidation and entrenchment.

"The innumerable peace initiatives undertaken by the United Nations are distinguished by their civilizing character, as well as by their highly humanistic orientation. The fact is that civilization cannot coexist with war, just as peace cannot exist without dialogue. There is no doubt that our United Nations system possesses, in addition to the tool of dialogue, the means whereby it is able to deal with problems that threaten peace and security in our contemporary world.

"Given the magnitude of the responsibility devolving on us all, given the accumulation of world problems in the areas of security and of the economy in particular, with all the attendant risks that arise therefrom, we are of the opinion that international solidarity requires all members of the international community to be more committed and

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to make further contributions to the search for effective solutions to such problems within the framework of the prevailing tenets of universalism and globalism.

"Five years ago, from this very rostrum, I described to your august Assembly the radical reforms which we had then undertaken to put in place in Tunisia with determination and perseverance, in the wake of the constitutional change of 7 November 1987, as we faced up to the new challenges resulting from the great changes which were confronting us within the international community.

"From the outset, we had opted, as a basic choice, for promoting the participation of our citizens and for the harnessing of their full potential in building their own future, in the conviction that such is the very essence of democracy, and its real meaning.

"Since modernization of political structures can never yield the desired results if not accompanied by a reform process covering the social and economic sectors, we promulgated laws and put in place structures which we deemed capable of liberalizing the economy and encouraging private initiative in all sectors of production. In addition, we readjusted the fiscal system and improved the functioning of the banking and financial system in order to align them with this trend. As a culmination of this process, we enacted a unified investment law and reorganized and streamlined the functioning of the administrative channels.

"At the same time, we devoted special attention to developing and strengthening our human potential in various areas, in particular through reforming our system of education and improving professional training. We also strengthened the cultural sector; consolidated the plan for the struggle against illiteracy and for the advancement of women, with a view to strengthening their rights and preserving their dignity by making them partners with full rights and duties in the work of development.

"We also attach great importance to the protection of children and of the family. In the social domain, we adopted dialogue and negotiation as the basis for relationships between the forces of production. We have also made efforts to preserve the gains of workers, to promote good working conditions, to expand social welfare coverage and to protect health and safety in the workplace while trying to increase job opportunities. At the same time, we have revitalized the values of social mutual assistance and national solidarity in order to render assistance to the disadvantaged, to help develop the outlaying areas of the country, to integrate them in the framework of the national economy and, thereby, to raise the standards of living of their inhabitants.

"The year 1994 has been a particularly momentous one for Tunisia. For the first time, a multi-party parliament has been elected. We had the honour of hosting the thirtieth summit of the Organization of African Unity and of welcoming President Nelson Mandela, hero of the struggle against racial discrimination and first President of the free Republic of South Africa, and a living symbol of Africa's wisdom in its most lofty sense.

"In the same year, we said farewell to President Yasser Arafat, who returned to his homeland after having lived with us for 12 years, a respected and honoured guest, as the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, now that the Palestinian people are beginning to recover their inalienable and legitimate national rights after a heroic struggle which lasted for half a century. We should like to take this opportunity to reaffirm our deep satisfaction at the positive and promising steps that have been taken in the context of the Middle East peace process, and voice our determination to continue to contribute to the efforts aimed at achieving a just, comprehensive and lasting peace in the Middle East.

"We have also spared no effort in strengthening further our close ties with our neighbours within the framework of the Arab Maghreb, as well as with the Arab, Muslim and African countries, the non-aligned countries and all friendly countries in Europe, Asia and America, with which we share mutual interests and have ties of fruitful cooperation. We have never hesitated to support those causes which were right and just, such as that of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and have responded positively, in so far as we were able, to the appeals and initiatives of the United Nations in the field of peace-keeping in several parts of the world.

"All these choices, efforts and achievements entitle us to reaffirm that today, Tunisia is able to meet the challenge of change which it had the courage to take up well before the advent of the global changes which we have been witnessing since the end of the last decade. Tunisia, the land of openness, tolerance and moderation, inspired as it is by its rich legacy of civilization and dedicated to its convictions and its guiding principles, will spare no effort in continuing to make its constructive contribution to international efforts, particularly within the framework of the United Nations, in order to strengthen sustainable development and peace throughout the world in the interest of all mankind. It goes without saying that our mandate at the head of the Organization of African Unity affords us a valuable opportunity to work further in mobilizing the international community and in focusing heightened attention on the concerns of the African continent, whose countries represent nearly a third of the Member States of the United Nations.

"Today, the African scene especially as projected by the audio-visual mass media, confronts us with highly contradictory images. Thus, while taking note with satisfaction and optimism of the reconciliation and harmony that we now see among the various elements of society in South Africa, which in the past were torn asunder by the odious system of apartheid, we feel despair and sadness at the persistent conflicts and hotbeds of tension in other parts of the continent. However, it would be neither fair nor objective to limit ourselves to a negative assessment of such events without attempting to shed light on them and to identify their causes in order to be able, with wisdom and concern, to remedy them and to contain their effects.

"In order to resolve the fundamental problems of Africa, we need to identify the ideal path and the most effective means of helping the continent gain control over the course of events and changes that are taking place on its soil. We have to do this not only for the sake of Africa but also in the interest of the international community as a whole. We should always keep in mind the imperative need to deal specifically with the fundamental issue which confronts so many African countries, namely, the achievement of political reform and the modernization of the economy, as corollaries of global development, under conditions of security and stability.

"There can be no doubt that in the area of political reform, the African continent has taken concrete and promising steps; but not as many as it would have liked, nor at the rate it would have desired. The African States more than anyone else, are well aware of that.

"On the other hand, as the efforts of the donor countries have fallen short of expectations, those countries should review their stance with regard to the development process in Africa in the light of the new realities and the changes that have taken place, which require the international community to redouble its efforts to participate effectively in the development of the continent.

"Africa is fully aware that the responsibility for its development is, in the first instance, its own. This is an awareness that has been confirmed by the African leaders, at their Summit in Tunis this year, when they stated that it is the duty of the Africans themselves to face up to the challenges that the present course of events confronts them with and to undertake firmly and in earnest the necessary economic reform and the rational development of human and material resources.

"At their thirtieth Summit, held in Tunis, the African leaders voiced an unshakeable will to live in peace and to mobilize their potential in the service of global and sustainable development, in order to be able to ensure a decent life for their fellow-citizens, free them from all forms of domination and hegemony and guarantee their ability to exercise their right freely to choose the model of society most in keeping with their traditions and the specific cultures. Experience has shown the gravity of the error of trying to carbon copy systems of power and of administration and impose them on peoples of other continents. The tragic consequences of such efforts are very much in evidence.

"Nevertheless, we look to the future with optimism, for today most countries of the African continent, with a heightened sense of responsibility and commitment, are trying to rid themselves once and for all of the legacies of the past. This necessary and legitimate endeavour can be made concrete only through consecration of the values of democracy, freedom and justice - those higher

values to which mankind in Africa has always adhered spontaneously and enthusiastically.

"During the Cairo Summit the African States were able to establish machinery for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts. This decision was reaffirmed at the Tunis Summit. The African machinery has already begun to operate and has made a start on the implementation of the resolutions of the Tunis Summit and is tackling numerous remaining problems and crises in Africa - such as those of Rwanda, Burundi, Angola and Somalia - with a view to assisting in their settlement.

"In this context, we have spared no effort, as acting President of the Organization of African Unity, in cooperation and in coordination with African leaders, to increase emergency assistance to Rwanda. It is indisputable that the tragic situation prevailing in Rwanda requires the participation of everyone of goodwill, including the international community, and the mobilization of all efforts to heal the wounds of the brotherly people of Rwanda and to help them recover their security and stability, in harmony and fraternity.

"In implementing Security Council resolution 918 (1994), the African States have not hesitated to demonstrate their readiness to send troops to Rwanda within the framework of the second stage of the United Nations Mission (UNAMIR II) with a view to the re-establishment of security in this brotherly country, in accordance with the decisions of the Arusha Summit.

"We would have hoped, however, that material and logistical support for the African States involved had not been delayed. It was this delay that prevented the deployment of troops in Rwanda at a time when their presence was essential to and would have been a decisive factor in establishing peace and security in this brotherly country and in the region and in bringing about the desired national reconciliation that would have made possible the return of thousands of refugees, and thus would have mitigated the effects of this tragedy in line with the Arusha process.

"In this respect, I should like to emphasize that the establishment of the machinery for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts reflects Africa's political will to give concrete expression to preventive diplomacy. However, the existence of such will is not enough by itself, when it comes to taking on such a role. Hence the major responsibility devolving on the United Nations to assist the machinery, by providing the funds for peace deriving from the Organization, as well as necessary means for the success of such intervention.

"At the Tunis Summit, the African countries adopted a code of honour and conduct designed to govern relations between the States of the continent and that aims at promoting the struggle against all forms of extremism, fanaticism and terrorism which are among the most important issues before the United Nations and the international community.

"In this respect, one of the object lessons to be learnt from the events in Rwanda is that it is imperative that the review of the United Nations Security Council's methods of work be expedited and that the necessary measures to deal with the problem of procrastination that has been noted in the implementation of United Nations resolutions be taken with the speed and diligence required in dealing with international crisis situations so that United Nations intervention may be effective and timely. Failing this, the role of preventive diplomacy will have to be strengthened and Africa will have to be provided with the opportunity to contribute to its strengthening realistically in order to avoid any recurrence of the tragedies we have witnessed, such as those of Rwanda, Burundi and Somalia.

"Joint African action in the economic sphere has continued since the African Economic Community was set up at the Abuja Summit in 1991. The aim is to initiate a strategy that would make possible the achievement of the complementarity and economic integration of the African States. Those States are required to achieve a greater degree of coordination and cooperation amongst themselves in order for them to be able to cope with the new developments in world markets especially after the establishment of the World Trade Organization. They have to explore prospects for the future so that Africa may be assured of a better position in international trade, which is witnessing a diminution of the share of the least developed countries.

"Clearly, the efforts that Africa is currently making to solve the problems of the present and to secure the future deserve the support and assistance of the international community. I have called upon the leaders of the seven richest countries, when they met recently in Naples, to become involved in the concerns of the African continent and to respond to its desire for a review of the level and content of its cooperation with the international community within the framework of a global strategy of North-South cooperation based on partnership and mutual development for peace and progress.

"While noting with satisfaction and being gratified at the success of numerous countries of America and of Asia with regard to settling the debt problem and increasing the rate of economic growth, we note with regret that the burden of external debt still constitutes the major obstacle to development efforts in Africa, as it has a highly negative impact on programmes of economic and social reform and on foreign investment.

"In addition, it is important to note that the increasing level of African indebtedness arises essentially from the cost of debt servicing, which is doubling year by year and which, along with the deterioration in the terms of trade, is a principal factor inhibiting the African countries' development efforts.

"We believe that stability, security and development are a collective responsibility and a common aspiration. The rich countries are called upon to take account of this in their policies; to make their public opinion sensitive to the importance of economic assistance for the developing countries; to make provision for a reduction in the staggering imbalances between peoples; and to highlight the positive consequences of such an approach, in the medium and in the long term, for the donor countries themselves through the opening up of markets, profitable investments and the limiting of emigration and of the problems resulting therefrom - the most appropriate means of translating preventive diplomacy into concrete action in dealing with all types of crises.

"It was in the context of these mutual interests that we suggested several years ago to the industrialized countries the formulation of a comprehensive strategy for development in Africa that would allow the States of the continent clearly to define their economic plans on the basis of continuous support by the countries and institutions that back them financially.

"Starting with 1989, I have proposed a number of initiatives at several international forums, including this General Assembly, the G-7 summits at Toronto and Naples, the European Union summit in Strassbourg, the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro and the Vienna Conference. All those initiatives related to such issues as human rights, the environment, the concretization of North-South cooperation through the conclusion of development partnership contracts between the developing countries and the industrialized countries and the recycling of debts. The ultimate aim was the codification of trade and political relations on the international level.

"All of those proposed initiatives have now taken shape. Some of them are being implemented, while others are still being studied by regional and international groupings.

"Today, the world witnesses new phenomena, which have an ever-greater impact on the international arena and which are primarily characterized by universality and comprehensiveness. We are therefore all the more convinced of the timeliness of our initiatives and of the need to carry on and complete their implementation.

"The organic interdependence of the present and future interests of States has now become a concrete reality. The same is true of the relationships amongst peoples in all their various aspects, which are subject to the functioning of the machineries of multilateral cooperation that manage the complex relations of States on the external and the domestic levels.

"It is in this context that the various forthcoming international events will take place, namely, the United Nations Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders, which will be held in Tunis; the International Symposium on Organized Crime; the World Summit for Social Development, as well as the proclamation of 1995 as the United Nations Year for Tolerance; and the World Conference on Women, which will take place in Beijing. All of

these events have been scheduled to take place in the context of the international action aimed at the setting up of humanity's agenda for comprehensive development - 'An Agenda for Peace' -that would reflect, on another level, the universal nature of human security.

"Thus the international community is called upon to mobilize itself on the occasion of the Tunis meeting on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders and the International Symposium on Organized Crime in order to hone a preventive strategy, identify the means required or, more specifically, to build effective institutional structures to combat terrorism and organized crime, including offences of an economic and political nature, such as violations of human rights and drug trafficking.

"In this respect, Tunisia has unswerving'y adopted a diplomacy of cooperation based on peace, stability and security. In addition, we are working to ensure that the United Nations Year for Tolerance will be a good occasion wherein such human values will be underscored and made a political goal and a means of avoiding and preventing disputes.

"As for the World Summit for Social Development, it will afford an opportunity to search for urgent international solutions to urgent social problems and to make clear the need for the formulation of an international strategy for social development, since social problems today are an overriding concern of all countries both in the North and in the South. Indeed, those problems endanger stability, security and peace throughout the world and in particular in Africa. Therefore, the African Heads of State and Government recognized, during their meeting in Tunis, the importance of this world Summit and the need carefully to consider the recommendations that will result from it.

"The strong upheavals that have taken place on the world scene have directly impacted on the conditions in many countries and particularly in those which do not have the wealth or sufficient potential to adapt to the new international order. Therefore, the international community is called upon to devise new modes of cooperation. Such modes, as they will have to be unprecedented in both form and content, will require the existence of political will and international solidarity and the establishment of a partnership for lasting social and human development.

"The improvement of living conditions, respect for human dignity, justice for all, equality of all races and peoples, as well as the values of tolerance and respect for others, are the indispensable foundations upon which social life and international cooperation must be based.

"We are gratified here to reiterate our great appreciation of the active role that the United Nations performs in the management of problems of peace, security and development throughout the world. We would also like to pay tribute to the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the son of Africa and of the Arab world who has worked to introduce a new dynamism into the agenda for comprehensive development and the 'Agenda for Peace'. This role is supported by the African States, and we continue to find it a source of great encouragement. In the same context, we take note with great satisfaction of the compromise reached within the framework of the Organization of African Unity concerning the need to implement the project for structural reform of the United Nations aimed at greater efficiency and increased balance and equality in the representation of regional groups.

"In this context, we insist on the legitimacy of the wish expressed by the African continent to strengthen its presence within the United Nations system by obtaining for itself that place which goes hand in hand with its position and with its aspiration to make a greater contribution to the management of international affairs and to the strengthening of security, stability and progress throughout the world.

"It is on behalf of Tunisia and on behalf of the Organization of African Unity that I renew this appeal, while hoping that at this session we will achieve adequate formulas for reforms to be undertaken within the United Nations system, in order to consolidate the foundations of security, peace and stability throughout the world and to provide a stimulus for the process of development for the benefit of all of humankind."

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Australia, His Excellency Senator the Honourable Gareth Evans.

Mr. Evans (Australia): I warmly congratulate you, Your Excellency Minister Essy, on your election as President of the General Assembly at this forty-ninth session. Australia is very pleased to serve in the Assembly under your presidency and looks forward to relying on your wisdom and your experience as you preside over our deliberations.

The last year has provided its full measure of challenges for the United Nations. The hopes for a new era of peace, after the decades of sterile confrontation between the super-Powers, seem not much closer to being realized. In Southern Africa and the Middle East, there have been remarkable advances in solving some of the world's most intractable problems, but they stand in contrast to the nightmarish conflicts of Bosnia, Somalia and Rwanda. These are only the latest, and most prominent, of a long string of deadly conflicts within State borders, tearing existing States apart and far exceeding the threats to peace posed by conflict between States. These intra-State conflicts have been marked by extreme savagery, each day offering new evidence of how cruel and dangerous a place the world remains for so many of its people.

The combined impact of a number of these conflicts has had a corrosive effect on the standing of the United Nations. Pictures of Blue Helmets standing by, unable to prevent conflict and impotent to save life, have become a media cliché. The role that the United Nations system has continued to play in its economic, social and humanitarian work, in responding to the "silent emergencies" of poverty and deprivation, has been overshadowed by the public image of an organization failing to meet its responsibilities and unequal to the challenges. Some of this imagery is deeply unfair, failing to take account of the innumerable constraints under which the United Nations operates - and in particular failing to acknowledge that, at the end of the day, the United Nations can do no more than what its Member States allow it to do, or give it the resources to do.

But the underlying reality is that the United Nations, and we Member States that make it up, have not yet developed a clear and confident sense of the United Nations own role in the new environment with which we are confronted - where the most common source of conflict is no longer disputes between States, but explosive conflict within States, more often than not expressed in the form of competing ethno-nationalist or religious claims.

Of course ethnic or religious difference is not, by itself, a recipe for conflict within States. Australia is just one example, among many, of a highly successful multi-ethnic, multicultural society in which tolerance and peace prevail. For ethnic or religious differences or competing nationalist aspirations to deteriorate into deadly conflict, something more is necessary. And almost invariably that something has been a failure of Governments to deliver basic needs and to satisfy the most basic aspirations of their citizens. In almost every case of major intra-State conflict of recent times, from the former Soviet republics to Rwanda, ethnic and religious conflict has been associated with declining per capita gross national product, the rise of demagogic politics, and the collapse of effective, responsible government.

All this means that it is no longer possible, in the post-cold-war era, for the international community simply to ignore, as it largely did in the past, conflict occurring within State borders which does not significantly impact on other States. The compartmentalization which existed through the cold war years - in which peace and security issues, development issues, and human rights and justice issues were treated as being in completely different conceptual and institutional boxes - no longer seems adequate to deal with the real world distress that so many people are suffering. Basic economic needs, let alone the needs of individuals and groups for dignity and liberty, cannot begin to be met in environments where nobody's personal security can be guaranteed. And that means, in turn, that the international community cannot simply turn away from being involved in protecting human security in many of those situations which might previously have been regarded as wholly internal in character.

This truth has, of course, already been recognized to the extent that the United Nations has become involved in essentially intra-State conflicts in Bosnia, Somalia, Rwanda and Haiti. But for the most part that involvement has been hesitant, half-hearted, lacking in confidence, worried about its rationale, too little, and too late. We have now to reach out boldly and try to recapture some of the original vision built into the stated aims of the Charter. We have to reintegrate the relationship among the three basic objectives of peace, meeting the need for security; development, meeting economic needs; and human rights and justice, meeting the needs for individual and group dignity and liberty.

The distinction between peace and security on the one hand and development on the other has too often been a matter for sterile and unhelpful debate, with attempts to trade off one for the other as key goals for the United Nations. Any viable modern concept of international peace, let alone peace within States, must recognize that the two are indissolubly bound up with each other: there can be no sustainable peace without development, and no development without peace.

In this context, Australia warmly welcomes the Secretary-General's efforts in producing An Agenda for Development which, following on as it does from An Agenda for Peace, fully recognizes the relationship between peace and development, acknowledging that equitable development eradicates many of the socio-political conditions in which threats to peace breed. It places an entirely appropriate emphasis on individual human beings as the end object and beneficiaries of our developmental efforts. This concept of course, in various guises, lies behind most of the international community's key ideas about development in recent years, including "adjustment with a human face", "human development" and, most recently, "human security". I must also applaud the focus which the Secretary-General has placed on practical international cooperation for global human security, for example in the areas of emergency humanitarian assistance, effective governance and all the social issues which form the agenda of the world social summit.

A more integrated effort will clearly be required of the United Nations system if the objectives set out in An Agenda for Development are to be achieved. It is imperative that we improve the system's ability to develop and implement social and economic development programmes in a more coordinated and coherent manner, including by finding ways to allow the Bretton Woods institutions and United Nations bodies to work in closer harmony. An example of a more systematic approach that the United Nations system might be able to adopt is the recent package of reforms undertaken by the Economic and Social Council. The new approach to operational activities, and the joint programme which the Economic and Social Council agreed to earlier this year to tackle the health and development impacts of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, demonstrate the achievements that are possible through such reform.

But more will be required than this, including changes in the senior decision-making structure of the United Nations Secretariat. Considerable reform in the intergovernmental elements of the United Nations system has been achieved and is being worked out, but the same is not true of the Secretariat itself. Notwithstanding some welcome recent changes, including in particular the designation by the Secretary-General of a special adviser on operational activities, I believe that there continues to be a strong case for creating a new working collegiate executive of four Deputy Secretary-Generals to work with the Secretary-General - responsible respectively for economic and social affairs, peace and security affairs, humanitarian affairs and administration and management.

A key source of threats to national and international security lies in unsustainable patterns of consumption and exploitation of resources. High population growth and competition for resources have been contributing factors in several of the recent crises involving the United Nations, including Rwanda and Somalia, and competition over scarce water resources is a potential cause of conflict in a number of regions. Such threats demonstrate how important it is, in security terms, for the United Nations to strengthen its ability to deal with development issues. The international community has developed a significant body of international laws, norms, agreements and arrangements for the rational and cooperative management of scarce resources. The United Nations system needs to ensure that it takes timely, effective and coordinated action to help implement this framework and the programmes for action agreed on at recent global conferences. The outcome of last month's Cairo Conference has provided a blueprint to address problems of population and development, acknowledging the central role of women in the development process.

For its part, the Commission on Sustainable Development must develop a genuine capacity to monitor the implementation of Agenda 21, using its political influence to bring about an observable difference in approaches to environment and development. We also attach particular importance to early implementation of the Programme of Action adopted at the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States in Barbados in May this year. No less important has been the entry into force of the Convention on the Law of the Sea. The adoption in June 1994 of the new Agreement implementing Part XI of the Convention secures a widely accepted legal order for the world's oceans, and provides, in effect, a common language for interaction between States on matters affecting two thirds of the world's surface.

From the outset of the establishment of the United Nations, the international community has acknowledged human rights as a central and legitimate subject of international attention. For many years, however, and notwithstanding the system of international human rights treaties, this attention carried with it the ideological baggage of the cold war and was too often marked by confrontation and recrimination. In recent years the international community has begun to develop more cooperative and potentially more effective ways of promoting better observance of human rights standards.

These include the creation of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the promotion of national and regional human rights bodies and improved technical assistance. They also include a welcome reaffirmation in Vienna last year of the indivisibility of all human rights - economic, social and cultural rights as well as civil and political rights - in developing a base for positive change. And they include the establishment of the International Criminal Tribunal to try violations of humanitarian law in the former Yugoslavia. A further important specific step that Australia believes should be taken in this direction is the creation of a permanent international criminal court, to deal with gross violations of international criminal law wherever they might occur.

Human rights observance has its own profound significance for peace and security. The drafters of the Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights recognized this connection. The international community has clear obligations under the Charter to protect basic human rights, and the most basic freedom of all - the right to life - is directly dependent on the maintenance of peace. We must be prepared to accept a wider application of the notion of security as it appears in the Charter, recognizing that security in the post-cold-war era has as much to do with the protection of individuals - guaranteeing human security - as it has to do with State security - the defence of national borders.

Human security, in this view, is as much if not more threatened by intra-State conflict as it is by conflict between States, and intra-State conflict is as much a concern of the United Nations as is international conflict. The experience of the last few years underlines the lesson that a State whose Government systematically disregards human rights, ignores the rule of law and fails to strive for equitable development and distributive justice is a State showing clear signs of heading towards breakdown and civil strife. To try to anticipate with appropriate preventive strategies that breakdown and conflict is, for the United Nations system, not to go beyond its Charter mandate, but to fully realize it.

The international community has traditionally talked about security in almost wholly military terms. In a United Nations context, collective security has meant Member States renouncing the use of force against each other and agreeing to come to the aid of a Member when it is attacked. Even the more recent, and very welcome, focus on the concept of common security has been premised on the idea that States will be more secure militarily with defence strategies that are aimed at building security with others rather than against others.

If the international community is to respond fully and effectively to the new challenges of the post-cold-war era, this perspective has to be broadened. One way to do that is to talk, as many are now doing, in terms of comprehensive security, which conveys the important idea that security is multidimensional in character, demanding attention not only to political and diplomatic disputes but to economic underdevelopment, trade disputes, human-rights abuses and the like.

But Australia's preference - as I spelled out last year in addressing this Assembly, when I launched the so-called Blue Book, *Cooperating for Peace* - is to describe our shared objective as cooperative security. The term cooperative security is designed to embrace and capture the essence of all those three other ideas: collective, common and comprehensive security. It is designed to shift the focus away from traditional, defensive, State-centred thinking, and at the same time to convey the flavour of consultation rather than confrontation, reassurance rather than deterrence, transparency rather than secrecy, prevention rather than correction, and interdependence rather than unilateralism.

Cooperative security in practice means a whole range of different strategies designed both to prevent and to resolve conflict, certainly including the traditional United Nations roles of peace-keeping and peace enforcement. But the strategies that I want particularly to emphasize today are those at the preventive end of the response spectrum, in particular peace-building and preventive diplomacy.

As the idea of peace building has been developed by the Secretary General in An Agenda for Peace and in An Agenda for Development, it has largely been restricted to the situations of post-conflict economic and institutional restoration within countries. Australia's view is that

while that is a very important element of the idea it is unduly restrictive, and that the concept of peace-building should assume a much more prominent place in our thinking about the international community's role and responsibilities.

We see peace-building as describing the whole range of strategies designed to address basic and underlying causes of disputes and conflicts: strategies aimed at ensuring that they do not arise in the first place, or that if they do arise, they do not subsequently recur. Those strategies are applicable at both intra-State and international levels. At the international level we are talking essentially about various regimes and arrangements designed to minimize threats to security, to promote confidence and trust and to create frameworks for dialogue and cooperation, especially through arms control and disarmament treaties; legal regimes such as those on maritime passage and the status of refugees; dispute-resolution mechanisms such as the International Court of Justice; and multilateral dialogue forums, such as the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) or the new regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN). At the in-country level, peace-building essentially involves strategies to encourage economic development, ensure the observance of human rights, broadly defined, and to facilitate good governance.

So perceived, peace-building lies right at the interface between the United Nations agendas for peace and for development. Peace-building activity is already occurring in a great many ways and in a great many places. The attention being given to environment, resource and population issues, the higher profile being accorded to human-rights protection and the significant progress being made on many disarmament issues are all manifestations of this at the general international level. And more attention is being given to democratization and institution-building strategies, as well as economic ones, for particular countries where effective governance has broken down, or seems about to.

What is really necessary is that more of this activity be integrated and coordinated within the United Nations system, that activities now being pursued in isolation and without any overriding sense of common purpose be better linked together. If we are to get peace, development and human rights objectives better synchronized, then some institutional changes are necessary. A good start may be to vest responsibility for developing and coordinating peace-building strategies in the position of deputy secretary-general for humanitarian affairs, a position which I suggested earlier should be created.

Whatever the achievability of peace-building international regimes in other areas, the end of the cold war has certainly opened up for the international community exciting new possibilities to prevent the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and destabilizing conventional-arms races. There is now, for example, an historic opportunity to conclude a comprehensive test-ban treaty. The decision by most of the nuclear-weapon States to maintain moratoriums on testing has made a major contribution to an improved negotiating atmosphere in the Conference on Disarmament. Australia very much hopes that the People's Republic of China will play its part in bringing those negotiations to a conclusion by likewise abstaining from further tests. Agreement on a comprehensive test ban will also have a significant impact on the achievement of nuclear disarmament, and especially nuclear non-proliferation, objectives. Australia urges all members of the Conference on Disarmament to seize this opportunity, which may not present itself again, to conclude the test-ban treaty as soon as possible.

A further vital contribution to nuclear disarmament would be made by the negotiation of a cut-off convention. Australia hopes that all members of the Conference on Disarmament will support the efforts of the Canadian coordinator and agree to a negotiating mandate by the beginning of the 1995 session.

Underlying all the efforts by the international community over the past 25 years to stem the spread of nuclear weapons has been the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). The NPT remains the cornerstone of international efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation. Its success is reflected in this phenomenon: the general expectation in the 1960s was that the world would have as many as 25 nuclear-weapon States by the 1980s, but instead, 160 countries have now acceded to the NPT as non-nuclear-weapon States, leaving only a handful outside the Treaty framework. The peaceful-use assurances derived from the Treaty and from the safeguards regime of the International Atomic Energy Agency have laid the foundation for very valuable international cooperation in fields such as nuclear power generation, nuclear medicine and agricultural and scientific applications of nuclear energy. In addition, the NPT incorporates the only commitment from the five nuclear-weapon States to complete nuclear disarmament. The cause of complete nuclear disarmament, which

Australia fully supports, is moving in the right direction, but it is clear that more needs to be done by the nuclear-weapon States if the pace is to be maintained.

A decision to be made on extending the Treaty at the NPT Review Conference next year will allow us to secure its benefits in perpetuity. This is an opportunity we must grasp to shape a world in which our collective commitment to nuclear non-proliferation, and to a world free of nuclear weapons, can be realized. Indefinite extension of the Treaty will create an environment in which the pressures for continued nuclear disarmament will be maximized, in which nuclear proliferation will best be prevented, in which trade and cooperation in the peaceful uses of nuclear energy can best be maintained, and in which the goal of universal membership of the Treaty can best be reached.

The pace of chemical- and biological-weapons disarmament continues to be encouraging. Progress is being made in preparing for implementation of the chemical-weapons Convention, and the recent Special Conference's decision to develop verification measures to strengthen the biological-weapons Convention is also very welcome. All members of the global community will benefit, in both security and trade and development terms, from the bans on these entire categories of weapons of mass destruction which will be put in place by the effective operation of both these Treaties.

In our efforts to prevent the further spread of weapons of mass destruction, we should not lose sight of the need to control conventional weaponry. Conventional weapons continue to be responsible for the overwhelming majority of the fatalities and casualties in contemporary armed conflict. In this area, the United Nations has taken an important first step in creating the Register of Conventional Arms, although I must note Australia's disappointment at the failure of its Expert Group to agree to expand the Register beyond transfers to cover productions and holdings. It is, however, most important that all States support this initial international exercise in the transparency of conventional weaponry by providing as much information as possible in their returns.

There is also a compelling need to strengthen the inhumane weapons Convention and, in particular, to extend further control over the use of, and trade in, land-mines, given the appalling and indiscriminate injuries caused to civilian populations often long after conflicts cease.

One of the most crucial elements in any functioning system of cooperative security is an effective capacity for preventive diplomacy. Australia is convinced that the United Nations can and should do more in this respect to prevent disputes escalating into armed conflict, and to this effect we propose to introduce a draft resolution on enhancing preventive diplomacy at the current session of the General Assembly.

We believe that there is widespread support for the United Nations to build stronger preventive diplomacy machinery and to develop the capacity foreseen by its founders and articulated in Article 33 to operate as an active agent in the peaceful settlement of disputes. The Organization would be able to operate more effectively in this area if it gave its staff additional skills in dispute resolution and conflict management. We commend its efforts to do so through the fellowship course of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research and we will continue to provide our backing for that training. We propose that the United Nations develop a dispute resolution service within its Secretariat. We advocate strengthening the Department of Political Affairs and increasing coordination, information-sharing and early-warning capacity among and between the various elements of the United Nations system. Greater use should also be made of the resources of Member States and stronger linkages forged with regional security arrangements.

Such regional organizations and arrangements themselves can play a most useful role. We should not have unrealistic expectations of them because most cannot match the capacity of global bodies to marshal resources for peace-building or, at the other end of the scale, for military responses to crises. They nevertheless offer a way of bringing together the parties to disputes in a constructive and non-confrontational framework. We welcome recent developments to strengthen regional approaches, in particular the recent inaugural meeting of the Regional Forum of the Association of South-East Asian Nations, with its evident willingness to develop preventive diplomacy in the Asia-Pacific region. We hope that others will share our interest in exploring the scope for establishing regional peace and security resource centres - to advance these objectives under the banner of regional organizations or the United Nations itself, or both.

We welcome the steps taken by the United Nations Secretary-General to strengthen the United Nations links with regional organizations. In relation to one such important organization in Australia's own part of the world, we welcome the strong support given by Member

States for the application made by the South Pacific Forum for Observer status in the General Assembly, itself a response to the Secretary-General's invitation to consider ways of further improving the coordination of the efforts of regional bodies with those of the United Nations. Australia also welcomes the regional peace-keeping exercise under way to assist Papua New Guinea achieve a peaceful resolution of the situation in Bougainville, and the Secretary-General's expression of support for that exercise.

There is no use talking about reintegrating the United Nations or reshaping its responsibilities unless the resources are there to carry out these responsibilities. The central responsibility of Member States in this respect is to set to rights the Organization's current financial problems. Australia urges, in the strongest terms we can, all Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time as a matter of obligation under the Charter.

We believe that the United Nations should look carefully at strengthening measures to encourage the prompt payment of contributions. We could, for example, explore the possibility of charging interest on overdue payments or applying Article 19 of the Charter to provide for only a 24-month grace period before voting rights are lost. We believe also that present budgetary systems could well be improved, in particular those involved with the financing of peace-keeping operations. We hope that, at a minimum, this General Assembly will be able to agree on some practical steps to move towards a sounder basis for such funding. Modern management practices, including a personnel policy more clearly based on merit, need to be adopted.

Measures such as these, while valuable, are unlikely to be sufficient in themselves to meet the financial demands which will be placed on the United Nations by its new agenda. The time has come to look at more innovative approaches to raising funds. One possibility which should be examined more seriously than hitherto, notwithstanding the complexities and sensitivities involved, is the application of levies on certain kinds of international transactions, such as air travel or foreign exchange, the capacity to carry on which depends on the existence of stability between States, to which the United Nations in turn makes a major contribution. An international levy on such transactions would be an equitable way of putting a price on an important public good. And the amounts involved are very large. The total value of global foreign exchange turnover, for example, is expected to amount to over $300 trillion next year. A levy on these transactions of only 0.01 per cent, if it could be collected, would yield over $30 billion. A flat-rate $10 added to the price of air tickets for each international sector travelled would yield $3 billion, nearly enough to cover all United Nations peace-keeping activities last year.

Whatever the funding strategy adopted, the financial burden on the United Nations system and the international community could be greatly reduced by putting a greater emphasis on preventive approaches to problem solving. It is very clear that prevention is far more cost-effective in the longer term than our current pattern of responding to problems, if at all, only after crisis points have been reached.

If the United Nations decision-making bodies are to have legitimacy and guaranteed international support in responding to the range of new and difficult situations with which the international community is now being confronted - particularly deadly conflicts and massive human rights violations occurring within States - they must be representative of the broad range of interests and perspectives of United Nations Member States. This is a key reason why enlargement of the Security Council's membership is a pressing concern for this General Assembly. It should be said, at the same time, that the Security Council's legitimacy will ultimately depend, not just on its representativeness, but upon the quality of its performance, and in that context it will be very important that the Assembly apply very rigorously the criteria and qualifications for Security Council membership elaborated in Article 23 of the Charter.

The model that would most simply meet the legitimate aspirations of the largest States excluded at present from permanent membership of the Security Council - including Japan and Germany, whose claims we support - would involve the creation of five new permanent membership seats. Assuming the continuation of the existing regional groups, three new permanent members would come from Africa and Asia, one from the Western European and Other States Group, and one from Latin America and the Caribbean. Australia would prefer not to extend the veto to any new permanent member. At the same time, we believe it would be appropriate slightly to dilute the veto power of the existing five permanent members by requiring two from their number to concur in its exercise.

If - as seems not impossible - agreement on a simple model of this kind proves not easily reachable, it may be worth giving consideration to a more complex alternative model. We have in mind one which would no doubt in

practice guarantee effective permanency for the largest States currently excluded from the Council, including Japan and Germany. But it would at the same time give a greater degree of flexibility to the Council's structure and greater opportunities for the recognition of several other countries which have made a major contribution to the Organization. It might, for those reasons, be a model capable of commanding more widespread support.

This alternative model would involve, in addition to the five existing permanent members - whose veto power would again be slightly diluted, as already outlined - the creation of eight quasi-permanent seats allocated among regional groups for which consecutive re-election would be possible, together with 10 rotating non-permanent seats as at present. It would make abundant sense, in our view, for the existing regional groups to be at the same time modified to reflect post-cold-war realities. A suggested way in which these 23 seats might be distributed among such a new set of regional groups is set out in the table attached to the circulated text of this statement; that table also sets out the way in which the seats might be distributed among the existing groups. On this model, the question which States became quasi-permanent members and how long they remained on the Council in that capacity would be a matter for determination by the regional group in question.

Consequential amendments would be required to Article 23 and Article 108 of the Charter, and the opportunity should, of course, be taken at the same time to remove the anachronistic enemy States clauses. An accompanying General Assembly resolution could elaborate any new regional-group arrangements.

It is, of course, the case that any change to Security Council membership is fraught with complexity and difficulty. But if we are ever to move from the stage of generalized discussion to concrete negotiations, it is necessary to put some quite specific and comprehensive proposals on the table. I certainly do not suggest that the models I have just advanced are the only possible approaches, but I do strongly suggest that the time is now ripe for us to commence such negotiation. I believe that others share our determination to move in a spirit of good will and conscientiousness to see to it that the United Nations of the next 50 years is soundly built; and an expanded, newly legitimized Security Council is a crucial foundation in this respect.

Australia wants the United Nations, over the next 50 years, to be an active and effective agent for the peaceful settlement of disputes. We want it to be a catalyst for international peace-building, working to strengthen international law, control and reverse arms races, promote confidence and dialogue between States and address underlying causes of instability, including internal conflict. We want the United Nations to promote, in more effective coordination with the major international economic and financial institutions, equitable and sustainable development and to coordinate responses to humanitarian crises. We want it to emerge even more strongly as a promoter of universal standards of human rights and their respect by Governments. We want the United Nations to pursue its objectives of peace, development and human rights in an integrated, coordinated way, with these objectives complementing, rather than being in competition with, each other. And we want it to be an Organization assured of the wholehearted backing of its Member States and provided by them with all the financial resources it requires to meet its obligations.

In short, we want the United Nations to become the Organization which was envisaged in its Charter. One of the priority objectives of our candidacy for election to the Security Council for 1997-1998 is to help in the building of such a United Nations. We believe we have valuable contributions to bring to this task, and we look forward to working closely with all our fellow Members in the shaping of a United Nations fully capable of meeting the needs and expectations of all of us in the international community over the next 50 years.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the next speaker, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Czech Republic, His Excellency Mr. Josef Zieleniec.

Mr. Zieleniec (Czech Republic): Please accept my most sincere congratulations, Sir, on your election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Let me also thank the outgoing President, Ambassador Insanally, who displayed exceptional diplomatic skills in managing the business of the General Assembly this past year.

I wish to welcome the delegation of South Africa, which has joined us after an absence of many years. We have been following developments in that country with particular attention and are delighted with the remarkable progress it has chalked up. The restoration of South Africa's full membership further augments the

universality of the United Nations, which is something we all favour.

The Czech Republic takes very seriously the responsibility it shares for the maintenance of international peace and security. This is reflected, on the one hand, in our participation in United Nations operations in the former Yugoslavia, Mozambique, Liberia and Iraq and, on the other hand, in our aspirations to become a member of Atlantic and European security organizations - the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and the Western European Union. This is why we have also joined the Partnership for Peace, one of whose priorities is coordination and cooperation by its participants for peace-keeping missions. The Czech Republic is also participating as best it can in humanitarian assistance to stricken countries. We are fast approaching the time when we will be able to provide direct economic development assistance as well.

The active part the Czech Republic is trying to play in the Security Council stems from our belief that we were elected to serve: to serve not our particular interests, but certain fundamental principles, irrespective of where in the world they may be imperilled.

The Security Council has in recent months dealt with several truly extraordinary situations. Let me examine some of them.

With regard to the crisis in the former Yugoslavia, reaching a political settlement is a key objective of world diplomacy. The United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) has been a critical element in managing this problem, and my country is proud of having a mechanized battalion integrated in this Force.

Belgrade, in accepting the Contact Group plan, has taken a helpful step towards an overall solution of the area's problems. We also welcomed Belgrade's closing of the border with Pale. In response, the Security Council re-evaluated the extent of sanctions imposed on Belgrade, hoping that its change of attitude would turn out to be serious and lasting. We will, nevertheless, be carefully examining reports of international monitors on how strictly Belgrade keeps its international border with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina sealed.

The mutual recognition of the States of the former Yugoslavia within their internationally recognized borders is the most important next possible step, one that is important for all countries of the region.

We are following closely the operations of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) forces and their cooperation with the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG). The case of Georgia is viewed by some observers as paradigmatic: this was the first time that a peace-keeping operation - to wit, UNOMIG - included the forces of a Power of the region. It was also the first time the Security Council actually welcomed the use of a force dominated by such a Power - the CIS force - in solving a local conflict. According to this view, cooperation between UNOMIG and the CIS in Georgia might perhaps serve as a model for resolving certain other conflicts elsewhere in the CIS. The Czech Republic, however, strongly believes that each peace-keeping operation is *sui generis*. Each conflict is different, and each operation therefore has to be evaluated on its own merits.

Africa, the continent of the President of the General Assembly, has this year seen some of the greatest tragedies to befall mankind since the Second World War. The scope and ferocity of the genocide in Rwanda is hard to comprehend. It goes far beyond anything that can be considered a "mere" civil war, and we are hard pressed to find any parallel to it. We welcome the conciliatory attitude of the new Rwandan Government.

The multinational force in Haiti led by the United States has raised many hopes in the initial phase of its operations. Its difficult task will be to curb and, better yet, prevent violence in a society that has seldom known any other way of solving political differences.

The Middle East is, fortunately, moving towards peace, and we congratulate the leaders of Israel, Palestine, Jordan and others who have amply demonstrated that even the most intractable problems of the world can be solved.

In some circumstances the United Nations has played a gallant role in the region. The liberation of Kuwait was a case in point. Since the Gulf War, we have insisted that Iraq fulfil all of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. We have great appreciation for the work of the Special Commission (UNSCOM) and have taken serious note of a number of measures Iraq has undertaken to meet the demands of Security Council resolutions concerning weapons of mass destruction. We are still, however, looking for a declaration by appropriate Iraqi authorities recognizing the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of Kuwait within its internationally respected borders.

Even this review suggests that a large portion of the Security Council's agenda has to do with peace-keeping operations. Following the end of the cold war, their number increased dramatically, with skyrocketing costs. This could not of course continue unchecked. Exercising restraint in authorizing new peace-keeping operations is the first condition for putting the whole system on a sound footing. In peace-keeping, as in every other aspect of its operations, the United Nations must live within its means.

There are of course two financial flows that determine the means at the disposal of the United Nations. On the one hand there is the outflow: a function of how troubled our world is and of which of its troubles we choose to tackle. On the other hand there is the inflow: a function of equity in allocating the financial burden and of the discipline of Members in shouldering it.

Only a few operations come to mind as having been largely successful. Let us take a closer look at one of these - the United Nations Operation in Mozambique. In that operation we see the following success factors: a well-crafted peace plan; a realistic mandate for the United Nations force; the fact that the politicians concerned put the interests of their country above all else; the tenacity of United Nations personnel in carrying out their mandate, and the timing of the operation. One wonders whether, today, the necessary troops could even be assembled.

By contrast, a number of peace-keeping operations are facing difficulties. Angola's peace plan, for example, was probably not crafted quite well enough; post-election fighting is a consequence of the fact that the antagonists kept their armies intact. In Somalia, the factions do not seem to agree that there ever was a peace plan in the first place. This is perhaps the case in Liberia as well. In the former Yugoslavia, the strength of United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) troops is in many ways not commensurate with their mandate.

We must therefore draw the necessary lessons. It is very important to examine the key success factors of successful operations and to try to ensure that they are present in every peace-keeping operation. But the main lesson is this: the United Nations is not a panacea for all of the world's ills. The Security Council is often sought out by factions who cannot agree on anything among themselves. But we have to insist on one principle: in general, it is the people and the leaders of a country who themselves have to demonstrate a readiness to tackle their problems before the United Nations can come in and assist them.

So much, in general, about the outflow of resources. At the same time, the United Nations faces a terrible crisis of inflow.

A radical reform of the existing system of financing is needed to overcome the crisis in the financing of peace-keeping. We strongly support the idea of replacing the existing arbitrary mechanism with a system based on standard, objective and quantifiable criteria. We also support the idea of establishing an independent body to study the principle of the capacity of countries to pay. This should become the fundamental criterion for determining the scale of assessments.

The Czech Republic meets its financial obligations towards the United Nations in full and on time. It has also covered an appropriate share of the obligations of the former Czechoslovakia. My country has not yet, however, been assessed for peace-keeping operations, pending determination of the group in which it should be placed. This matter should be settled in the context of agreement on objective criteria for making such determinations in general.

The increase in the number of peace-keeping operations has increased the dangers faced by their personnel. We therefore consider it particularly important to complete as soon as possible the work on a convention dealing with responsibility for attacks on United Nations and associated personnel. Last year we were acutely aware of the need for greater responsiveness on the part of the Security Council to United Nations personnel at large. This need continues, but some slight progress has been attained. Meetings of Security Council members with countries contributing troops to major peace-keeping operations have become more frequent, perhaps even routine.

Improved cooperation between the United Nations and regional organizations would no doubt improve the efficiency of both in dealing with international crises. We are particularly interested in further strengthening the cooperation on the part of the United Nations with the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, but also its cooperation with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. That is why last January, during our Presidency of the Security Council, we suggested the possibility of a United Nations seminar with regional organizations. Understanding full well that they all have different charters, characters and qualities, we still feel that a continuing exchange of experience can enrich the entire international system of multilateral diplomacy. We

commend the Secretary-General for organizing the first meeting along these lines earlier this year.

The future shape of the Security Council is one of the most important questions this General Assembly session will deal with. The effort exerted to date is reflected in the report of Ambassador Insanally, Chairman of the ad hoc Working Group. The basic role of the Security Council - maintenance of international peace and security - determines its unique position. There is no question about the need for it or about its impact on international affairs. This exceptional position of the Council should be maintained.

Efforts to improve its functioning are thus informed by other considerations. It has to earn the greater confidence of Member States. Even after it is reformed, the Council will have to remain rather small to maintain its efficiency. If its work improves, that should not be because of increased size or expanded responsibilities but because of its enhanced authority. The countries that should be considered for new permanent membership are those that have the economic, political and military potential to contribute to the maintenance of global security, are prepared to assume the responsibilities implied by permanent membership, and are ready actively to participate in the implementation of Security Council decisions. The key factor, in our view, is the global influence of candidates. The principle of unanimity and its obverse - that is, veto power - expressed in 1945 the fundamental responsibility of the great Powers for maintaining world peace. Since the dissolution of the bipolar world, this responsibility has, if anything, further increased. We therefore favour maintaining the unanimity principle.

We are delighted that our last General Assembly session resulted in the creation of the post of High Commissioner for Human Rights and congratulate Ambassador Ayala Lasso on his appointment. Even during his very first few months in office, he has demonstrated its usefulness. We have no doubt that this Assembly will follow through with the implementation of additional recommendations of the 1993 Vienna International Conference on Human Rights.

The danger of nuclear proliferation has not disappeared. Ongoing discussions with the Democratic People's Republic of Korea are one example that proves this point. We support an indefinite and unconditional extension of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons and we will advocate this position at the fifth Review Conference of that Treaty next year. We support an increased role for the International Atomic Energy Agency in verifying how the Treaty is being adhered to.

We favour accelerating work on the comprehensive test-ban treaty. We share the view that the production of fissionable material for nuclear weapons and of nuclear explosive devices should be banned. We support maintaining a moratorium on nuclear tests and an agreement on banning all such tests, as well as further negotiations on limiting nuclear arsenals and on the measures necessary to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear material.

Ours is a small world full of problems, with almost 50 years of global peace but replete with local wars; abundance side by side with poverty; success in South Africa, progress in the Middle East, but a Bosnia and a Rwanda torn asunder. All this, and much more, is characteristic of today's world and is reflected in today's United Nations. Our fervent hope is that when the leaders of the world meet here next year, they will be celebrating 50 years of an Organization that will have become even more successful in a world that will be much closer to overall peace, prosperity and democracy.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance of the State of Kuwait, His Excellency Mr. Nasser Abdullah Al-Rawdhan.

Mr. Al-Rawdhan (Kuwait) *(interpretation from Arabic)*: It gives me pleasure to extend to you, Sir, on behalf of the delegation of the State of Kuwait, our sincere congratulations on your well-deserved unanimous election to the presidency of the forty-ninth session of the General Assembly. We are confident that your qualities of leadership will ensure efficient and smooth deliberations. I take this opportunity to underline the good and friendly relations that exist between Kuwait and your country.

I should like also to pay tribute to Mr. Samuel Insanally, the President of the last session of the Assembly, for the competence he demonstrated in guiding the Assembly's proceedings during his term of office. The delegation of Kuwait would like to place on record its appreciation for the achievements made under his leadership.

I wish also to reiterate the appreciation of the Government and people of Kuwait and my own personal

recognition of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, for his consistent efforts to enhance the performance of the world body and the pursuit of its goals on behalf of mankind. Kuwait fully supports the Secretary-General's vision in carrying out his "Agenda for Peace", in which he elaborated his concept of preventive diplomacy.

Next year, the United Nations will commemorate the fiftieth anniversary of its creation as an Organization of sovereign States whose relations are governed by the principles and purposes embodied in the Charter of the United Nations. The overriding concern of this global institution is to secure world peace, the independence of nations and freedom, and to harness energies for construction and development. The United Nations system is also a framework within which we collectively seek to alleviate the misery and suffering of our deprived and disadvantaged fellow human beings. It is in this context that people would attain their freedom and independence, colonial rule would come to an end and the right to self-determination would become more entrenched than ever before. Thanks to the United Nations mandates, universal efforts are ever-growing to liberate humanity from the grip of suppression and fear and from the shackles of backwardness and ignorance, on the one hand, and to ensure global security and stability, on the other.

The results of these efforts over several decades have been reflected in major historic achievements despite all the challenges and odds faced by peoples in their steady endeavours to attain independence and reaffirm their identity. All those accomplishments turned out to be the salient features of our collective vision of the future. In all fairness, the admirable work of the United Nations and its accomplishments since its inception proved the relevance and importance of the tenets and objectives upon which it was conceived. In the early days, freedom from colonialism was the primary concern. The focus has now shifted to the improvement of general living conditions. In the past, the struggle was for independence, whereas the challenge now lies in the reaffirmation of and commitment to the rights of the human person to a decent life in freedom.

Indeed, the world has recently undergone an enormous transformation in terms of ideology, systems of governance and international relations. The United Nations interacted with these changes. The era of confrontation between ideological blocs has now given way to genuine mutual and multilateral interdependence. A cursory glance at the recent and forthcoming United Nations major world conferences clearly proves this trend. There was the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the World Conference on Human Rights in Vienna in 1993 and the Conference on Population and Development which ended days ago in Cairo. The World Summit for Social Development and the World Conference on Women are to be held in Copenhagen and Beijing, respectively, next year.

In this regard, Kuwait supports the movement towards renewal and restructuring, away from the static stereotypes of the past. To our minds, international restructuring is a constant evolutionary process which should be responsive to the ever-changing global developments. Hence our active contribution to the efforts made by the General Assembly and its organs towards updating and reviving the mechanisms of the United Nations system. It is our hope that the current streamlining exercise will foster the capability of the United Nations to meet the increasing demand for its services and operations and will contribute to a better fulfilment of its mandates under the Charter.

In particular, we look forward to the development of the work, composition and effectiveness of the Security Council so that it may reflect the recent changes on the world scene, on the one hand, and satisfy the wishes and aspirations of the United Nations larger membership, on the other.

In the meantime, Kuwait believes that our collective efforts should at this stage focus on the formulation of more recognizable parameters of an international order which should be based on the following facts.

Firstly, the rationale, essence and thrust of the new order should derive from logical facts. Dialogue, persuasion and non-use of force, the rejection of aggression, the condemnation of terrorism and respect for the rights of all Member States to pursue their own policies in such a way that ensures their own interests within an international framework structured along the lines of justice, equality, the rule of law and compliance with international treaties, especially the United Nations Charter, should all be key components of the new vision.

Secondly, focus on human development in the context of economic and social development should represent a qualitative shift away from the futile, indeed harmful, stockpiling of weapons of mass destruction and the consequential squandering of national assets on disastrous aggressive adventures. In this regard, Kuwait

has evolved a relevant vision through its painful experience of the brutal Iraqi occupation. One of the major lessons drawn is that the issue of human resources development should be accorded a higher priority on the international agenda.

Thirdly, the promotion of North-South dialogue with a view to narrowing the existing gaps in the living standards of the two groups. The ultimate aim is to ensure that the North should not continue to maintain an almost exclusive monopoly of wealth and affluence while the South continues to languish in the tight grip of endless poverty. Is it not high time for us all to recognize that the concept of collective security will remain seriously deficient and doubtful under the existing socio-economic equation, i.e. a minority living in luxurious comfort while the majority is striving to survive in appalling misery?

Fourthly, insistence on the elimination of all vestiges and forms of racial discrimination, including opposition to the neo-racist policies and practices that surfaced as a result of the collapse of the old order. Obviously, the neo-racists resort to the use of force in order to secure territorial gains and to acquire land by force under the smoke screen of ethnic cleansing. Within the practice of ethnic cleansing emerges an unmistakable pattern at work. Intensely bestial instincts of mass murder and destruction break loose, contrary to all norms of human discipline and civilized conduct. Therefore, we are all duty-bound to resist and suppress this criminal tendency in order to reassure all peoples of their sense of human community and common destiny.

In this context, I wish to pay tribute to the leaders of South Africa and to congratulate the people of South Africa on their triumph over the system of apartheid. We know too well the great sacrifices they made and the long hard path they forged to reach where they are now. I am confident that the emergence of a non-racial South Africa to the arena and the resumption of its role in the United Nations will in time contribute significantly to multilateralism in terms of consolidating the principles of justice and equality. There is no question but that the struggle of the people of South Africa to eliminate racism will probably remain for a long time to come a rich source of inspiration for all of us.

In the crucial area of peace-building on the basis of justice, the Middle East region has recently seen dramatic developments that could indeed prove to be historic turning-point, which may well be recorded in the annals of peace achievements despite the enormous problems arising from the many hotbeds of tension that jeopardize security and stability in different regions of the world. Following their agreement to end the state of war between them, Jordan and Israel signed an accord to serve as a basis for a just settlement.

Also, the Palestinian National Authority started to assume its responsibilities in the local administration of Gaza and Jericho in the Israeli-occupied territories as a first and important step towards the exercise by the people of Palestine of their inalienable right to self-determination.

Furthermore, contacts are now under way to ensure the resumption of negotiations on both the Syrian and the Lebanese tracks, which would lead to a just peace that would address, as we hope, in a an equitable and responsible manner, the concerns of all parties directly involved. Kuwait has expressed its support for these endeavours. It also participated in the multilateral meetings, while fully convinced that this formula is doomed to failure unless concrete and significant progress is achieved on all bilateral tracks. The multilateral formula, as we must always bear in mind, is an arrangement to back up the bilateral tracks, and not a by-pass to skirt them. It was in this spirit that Kuwait participated in the regional meetings, and out of our conviction that endorsement of and support for the peace process in the Middle East was in the final analysis a collective responsibility to be shared by the international community inasmuch as the entire world, not just certain protagonists, stands to gain from its benefits. For the record only, let me recall that Kuwait had participated in the ad hoc meetings on economic development for the territories subject to self-government. We contributed $25 million towards building the institutions required for the creation of the Palestinian National Authority.

The People of Palestine have suffered over the past several decades unspeakable injustice and deprivation as a result of the loss of their land, the denial of their right to self-determination and from being prevented from establishing their national State. It is our hope now that this people, which is recognized for resourcefulness and a sense of purpose, will at long last be able to exercise its full rights like all other peoples, including the establishment of its State, whose capital would be Al-Quds Al-Shareef.

Let me reiterate that the underpinnings of lasting stability and comprehensive peace as envisioned in Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973),

together with the concept of land for peace, require a firm political commitment to ensure progress on all tracks - especially the Syrian track, which is the cornerstone of the peace-building process. Full withdrawal from occupied Syrian territory is therefore essential. Equally essential is the complete and unconditional implementation of Security Council resolution 425 (1978), which requires a total Israeli pull out from southern Lebanon.

In today's world, which is characterized by interrelated and complex interests and civilized conduct on the basis of compliance with the rule of law and respect for international treaties; in today's world, when the winds of modernism have been blowing even to the most distant regions, the Iraqi regime continues to be a menace to security and stability in our region. It persists in defying the collective will of the international community as represented by the Security Council. This is demonstrated by its failure thus far to comply unconditionally with all the Council resolutions relating to its aggression against the State of Kuwait. Its reaction has invariably been characterized by subterfuge, procrastination, equivocation and selectivity.

Although more than four years have now passed since the Iraqi regime was defeated and its forces evicted from Kuwait, and regardless of its acceptance of all Security Council resolutions, including Security Council resolution 687 (1991), which set forth cease-fire conditions and highlighted regional security arrangements, the regime continues to refuse to address the core issue of the whole problem, namely recognition of the State of Kuwait and of its sovereignty within the international borders as demarcated, approved and endorsed by the United Nations and guaranteed by Security Council resolution 833 (1993), adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter.

The international community's firmness in the face of the Iraqi regime's manoeuvres, the Security Council unanimity in its insistence on seeing the Iraqi regime fulfil all its obligations under Council resolutions are the right and appropriate response to the defiant stand of the Iraqi regime.

At this juncture, let me outline Kuwait's policy regarding this fateful question. First, Iraq must unconditionally implement all Security Council resolutions relating to its aggression, especially resolution 687 (1991).

Secondly, Iraq must accept Security Council resolution 833 (1993) regarding the demarcation of borders between Iraq and the State of Kuwait. Here, Kuwait insists that such acceptance should come in a clear and unequivocal manner. It should be formally documented by the Iraqi Revolutionary Command Council and the Iraqi National Council and published in the Iraqi *Official Gazette*. All the above should then be set out in a letter addressed to the Security Council and deposited as an official document in the records of the United Nations.

Thirdly, Iraq should cooperate in good faith and in a responsible manner with the International Committee of the Red Cross in accounting for all Kuwaiti and third country prisoners and detainees. Serious efforts must be made to resolve this long-standing humanitarian issue, which has long been exploited by the Iraqi regime as a bargaining chip for securing narrow gains.

Fourthly, all provisions of Security Council resolutions relating to the return of Kuwaiti property and to compensation must be carried out. We would also like to see concrete implementation of the paragraphs relating to the Iraqi armament programme, the elimination of weapons of mass destruction and the export-import permanent control system.

Fifthly, Iraq's regional behaviour should not jeopardize security and stability in the region. Iraq should respect the norms of good neighbourliness by renouncing its greedy claims and its policy of blackmail; it should cease intervening in the internal affairs of neighbour countries and abstain from sponsoring and supporting terrorism, and it should renounce the aggressive tendencies which have been its hallmark for too long.

Once again, we would like to underline the fact that we in Kuwait are aware of the suffering of the people of Iraq and sympathize with the Iraqis who have had to endure hardship as a result of the policies pursued by a regime imposing itself by force on the Iraqi people. That is the very same regime which declines to utilize the mechanism offered to export oil under Security Council resolutions 706 (1991) and 712 (1991). In the same vein, let me emphasize that we would like to see the territorial integrity of Iraq preserved and safeguarded. This too is an essential component of regional stability.

The whole set of Security Council resolutions regarding Iraq constitutes one indivisible political and legal whole. We cannot and should not tolerate the selective approach pursued by the Iraqi regime in implementing Council resolutions. Core issues must be addressed squarely by Iraq, otherwise it will remain

under the illusion that it can dent the steadfast position of the Security Council. At this point, I wish to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the Security Council, which demonstrated unanimity in its recent review of sanctions against Iraq on 14 September. The Council reaffirmed that the sovereignty and boundaries of the State of Kuwait under its resolution 833 (1993) are the essence of the matter and that this will form the basis of the Council's priorities in dealing with the sanctions regime.

High among Kuwait's national priorities comes the issue of stability in the Gulf region. Accordingly, we have been working in close collaboration with other members of the Gulf Cooperation Council to resolve all the outstanding problems between Iran and the United Arab Emirates in regard to the three islands - Abu Moussa, Greater Tumb and Smaller Tumb - through dialogue and on the basis of respect for national rights and international treaties. Hence, we have supported the recent initiative by the United Arab Emirates to have recourse to the International Court of Justice, which is the international judicial organ that has the competence to resolve disputes between States. In the meantime, we are confident that both parties to the conflict will demonstrate reason and prudence and that they are eager to reach a just and peaceful settlement of the litigation through legal channels and in such a way that would not compromise the rights of the United Arab Emirates.

Kuwait is following with deep concern the situation in Afghanistan. We appeal to all factions there to put the interests of the Afghani people ahead of all other considerations. We sincerely call upon them to put an end to the fighting and to help facilitate the current efforts of the United Nations to bring about national unity and channel energies towards reconstruction.

We are distressed also by the increasing deterioration of the situation in sisterly Somalia. Again, we appeal to all factions that are engaged in the conflict there to demonstrate wisdom by acting in accordance with the interests of all Somali people. We pray for national reconciliation that will preserve the unity and independence of Somalia.

The tragedy of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina is of great concern to the Government and people of Kuwait. Initially, we were optimistic that the efforts of the Contact Group would prove to be successful in reaching the comprehensive Peace Plan. The Bosnian Muslims and Croats gave the internationally supported peace plan their approval despite the fact that it did not satisfy all their legitimate demands. However, the Bosnian Serbs, in open defiance of the international will, rejected the Plan and, instead, relied on the use of force to impose a *fait accompli* and to exact territorial gains, at the expense of other parties.

Kuwait believes that the Security Council should, without any further delay, lift the embargo imposed on arms supplies to the Bosnian Muslim to enable them to exercise their legitimate right of self-defence in the face of blatant aggression.

In today's world it is totally unacceptable that we should all remain virtually passive witnesses to an exercise in which a minority, through the use of overwhelming military force, tramples the legitimate rights of the majority.

In the context of global realities on the ground, the international community should not underestimate the gravity of problems faced by the developing nations in their pursuit of economic development and progress. Economic readjustment and restructuring, foreign-debt burdens and pressures of inflation are but a few of these weighty problems. These obstacles to development were recognized by Kuwait at an early stage. Hence, Kuwait took the initiative to write off loans of developing countries whose repayment was overdue. Parallel to that action, we have expanded the operations of the Kuwait fund for economic development. We have also increased our contributions to the regional and international financial institutions.

For more than two decades now my country has been playing a leading role in the provision of aid to developing countries. The total assistance provided by Kuwait exceeds 4 per cent of its annual gross national product and is more than four times the suggested level of official development assistance. That being the case, we hope that developed countries will increase the level of their assistance with a view to reducing the current disparities in standards of living.

An effort to narrow the gaps between the living conditions of peoples around the world would make a powerful impact on world peace and stability. Equally, the creation of job opportunities and the maintenance of hope in the future are essential for a peaceful life at home and to harmonious relations between nations.

In this context, Kuwait welcomes the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade agreement that was

achieved after long and arduous rounds of negotiations, and it looks forward to the entry into force of that agreement following the required endorsements.

Dialogue, understanding and rapprochement are valuable tools in international relations. They facilitate our cooperation and our collective endeavours, as a family of nations, to meet our needs and fulfil our aspirations. If the fruits of technology and science can be fully harnessed for this purpose we shall reap the benefits thereof. The whole planet has indeed become a global village, in which we can closely follow world events as they unfold, thanks to the great leaps forward in the areas of science, technology, transportation, communications and information technology.

If anything, this is a testimony to impressive human cooperation. Such cooperation, when anchored in dialogue and understanding, is perhaps the most viable option for bringing us closer to peace, stability and progress.

The President *(interpretation from French):* I now call on the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Mr. Roberto Robaina González.

Mr. Robaina González (Cuba) *(interpretation from Spanish):* As we who are gathered here deliver our statements, a small and impoverished Caribbean nation is being subjected to military occupation. The inconceivable deal struck with the generals responsible for the coup d'état - yesterday threatened as murderers, but today turned into complacent partners - ignores the decisions of the international community and the will of the Haitian people. The fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter - indeed, the authority of the Security Council and of the United Nations itself - are among the victims of this unfortunate event, as they have been totally ignored in actions carried out allegedly on their behalf.

History is repeating itself. It was the guns of invaders and the boots of foreign occupants that installed in Haiti the various dictatorships of this century and trained and supported those who are still perpetrating tyranny on their people. How, then, can we trust them to promote democracy in the future?

Cuba has always supported and promoted efforts to restore the constitutional order in Haiti with the unconditional and unrestricted return of President Aristide and has rejected the attempts to resort to foreign intervention as a means of resolving the conflict. At the appropriate time, Cuba denounced the Security Council's decision to go along with the violation of the Charter by some of its members and to join in their interventionist designs. Now that we are faced with a *fait accompli*, we can do nothing except reiterate our Government's position: those who are today applauding the invasion could become tomorrow's victims.

It is clear that an essential component of this tragedy is the manipulation to which the United Nations - an organization born under the pretext of the sovereign equality of its members - has been subjected.

Cuba reiterates its firm rejection of the attempts to adopt unilateral decisions on issues of vital importance to all peoples and of the abuse of the anachronistic privilege of the veto, granted by the Charter to a group of States with permanent membership of the Security Council.

It is urgent to ensure that democracy prevails in international relations and in the United Nations. We must ensure respect for the Charter and put an end to its systematic violation by the most powerful.

On this the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations it is imperative that the Organization be democratized without any delay. The time has come for this institution to stop catering to the interests of a handful of big Powers.

Mr. Mishra (India), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The President of the Assembly, a distinguished son of the African continent whose election to the presidency honours us all, is well aware that Somalia is still fresh in our minds. The tragedy of hunger and starvation in that sisterly nation has continued, even if television newsreels no longer show the horrible pictures that served as a prelude to the so-called humanitarian invasion sponsored by this Organization.

In spite of such invasions, Haiti and Somalia will continue to be poor countries. The evils of the third world are not resolved through military occupations, which are merely used to serve selfish interests.

In both cases, which have already become dangerous precedents, the Security Council acted under pressure from a big Power, which monopolized the implementation of these actions and even prevented the majority of Member States from voicing their views. In both cases, under the alleged authority of the Security

Council, neutrality and impartiality, essential principles of that body, were violated.

These are examples of the Security Council's illegitimate foray into areas beyond its mandate: intervention based on vague arguments of humanitarian protection, or the authorizing of one or several States to take unilateral punitive actions, under Chapter VII of the Charter, in operations of invasion, occupation and intervention.

In fact, what is at stake is the sovereignty, self-determination and political independence of countless countries, mainly but not only of the third world.

Attempts are being made, at the expense of the suffering of a number of peoples, and without their consent, to openly give carte blanche and a predominant role to the Security Council regarding issues alien to its mandate and on which this Organization has no prerogative whatsoever.

There is no doubt that the specific functioning of the Security Council deserves careful consideration, and that this body must become democratic, with an enlarged membership more representative of the countries of the third world. Poor and small countries are rightly entitled to be present on the Council and to demand that it follow equitable and transparent procedures in its activities. There should be permanent members from Latin America, Africa, and the developing countries in Asia. Membership should not be the preserve of large economic Powers associated with the West.

The Security Council cannot arrogate to itself powers that have not been invested in it, nor overstep the Organization that created it and to which it is accountable. The General Assembly must assert its control over the actions of the Security Council and demand that it respect the Charter.

There should also be greater response to the interests of the developing world in other areas of the Organization. The crucial problems of its peoples are not and cannot be resolved with invasions nor with allegedly humanitarian military operations. Nor can they be resolved with emergency assistance programmes whose only aim is to mitigate the most alarming consequences of structural underdevelopment.

If the international community and the United Nations, its most representative organization, do not adopt the timely measures and programmes required to develop the third world, we will be using this forum to debate the causes and consequences of the arrival of underdevelopment in the first world.

The growing concerns of industrialized countries over immigration issues is quite illustrative, as confirmed by the debates undertaken in the recently concluded International Conference on Population and Development.

It is clear that concepts regarding cooperation imposed from the North are prevailing, with flashy titles but devoid of any practical meaning for the solution of the problems brought about by poverty, and tending to mutilate the right to development for which peoples of the world are clamouring. Although concepts such as sustainable development, human development or sustainable human development may contain defensible ideals from a theoretical point of view, they are actually being used to corrode the commitments achieved during long years of efforts aimed at facilitating international cooperation for development on a just and democratic basis.

Unacceptable conditions and interference in the domestic policy of States are thus being imposed, and attempts are being made to fix strategic priorities for development in countries that, though poor, are sovereign and independent. Hence, the right to development proclaimed by this Organization is being subordinated to the interests of the large transnational economic powers, which are actually continuing to dictate the rules and practices of international economic relations.

The United Nations agenda for development must not be allowed to replace the International Strategy for Development and other important instruments that were the result of the efforts of the developing countries to defend their interests and on which they exhibited great flexibility and the ability to compromise.

Nor should the United Nations continue to be allowed to be used for the imposition of neo-liberal economic models, bringing backwardness and misery to millions of persons in exchange for short-term economic growth benefiting only the elitist minorities in third world countries and their partners in the affluent North.

The fundamental approach, in Cuba's view, should be focused on comprehensive economic growth based on justice and equity to meet pressing social needs. International economic relations must be restructured on

the basis of effective, just, equitable and non-discriminatory cooperation with the countries of the South.

Poverty is not a predestined fate, let alone a human right, no matter how hard the rich countries try to prove otherwise. As long as universal respect for human rights continues to be manipulated by a handful of rich nations, the have-nots of the South will continue to play the role of the accused, with the affluent societies in the North playing the parts of judge and jury.

All attempts to impose as universal dogmas systems of government designed by the privileged nations of the first world, regardless of the different social, economic, historical and cultural realities of the third world, are unacceptable and doomed to failure.

We must also put an end to hypocrisy.

It would be unforgivable for us to remain indifferent to the tragedy of humankind while wasting our efforts on elitist concerns. War, xenophobia, neo-fascism and racism are proliferating in our midst; the degradation of women and children is increasing; unemployment is on the rise; the environment is deteriorating and the culture of entire populations and nationalities is being crushed. Millions of human beings are afflicted by poverty and starvation; they are denied access to basic medical care and education. Yet the United Nations has done very little indeed to deal with these issues as what they really are: clear violations of human rights.

Countries that are struggling, on the basis of equity and justice, to attain their development are really working in favour of the human rights of their peoples; countries that prevent us from developing are violating the human rights of our populations.

The Association of Caribbean States was recently established as a means of responding to the globalization of the international economy and of strengthening cooperation among the States, countries and territories of our region. We, the peoples of the Caribbean, are conscious of the fact that only by closely reconciling our interests can we become competitive markets. That new organization, brought into being by urgent needs, contributes, together with the Ibero-American Summits, to promoting the indispensable economic integration and joint analysis of common strategies in an environment that links us through history and culture.

As an integral part of that community of Latin American and Caribbean nations, Cuba has decided to sign, at the appropriate moment, the Tlatelolco Treaty on the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in our region.

It is well-known that warships armed with nuclear weapons are anchored both in the portion of our territory illegally occupied by the United States and in neighbouring Puerto Rico. Without renouncing our demand for their withdrawal, we subscribe to the noble aims of Tlatelolco. We do so as testimony to our will to join with the rest of Latin America and the Caribbean, as a gesture towards our brothers in the region, and out of a desire to broaden our mechanisms for reconciliation and dialogue.

At the Ibero-American Summits, held since 1991, Latin peoples south of the Rio Bravo have for the first time met exclusively among themselves to discuss issues of common interest. Meanwhile, another Summit has been convened in, of all places, Miami. All the Governments in America except the one I represent have been invited. It is said that three main issues will be discussed: free trade, collective security and the promotion of programmes to alleviate extreme poverty.

We will have to determine which of the two Americas stands to reap the greater benefit from the Miami Summit. If positive results for Latin Americans were to emerge from the meeting, Cuba would sincerely welcome its convening, even if we were not present. It could become an excellent opportunity to demand of our neighbour to the North fair treatment in trade and financial relations, as well as in the transfer of technology, and to request the Host Country to fulfil its obligations in the field of international cooperation. It remains to be seen how a Government that has cancelled its meagre aid programmes to the region could raise the necessary funds to alleviate poverty among the countries convened.

Let me now say a few words regarding my homeland. On two consecutive occasions this forum, by an overwhelming majority, has demanded the elimination of the economic, trade and financial blockade imposed upon my country by the Government of the United States. In both cases the United States has replied with silence.

It is not, as some would have it, a matter of victory for the blockaded nation and defeat for the blockading nation. Our friends or the Governments that fully

support our policies were not the only ones that voted to put an end to this irrational siege. The simple fact is that the great majority of the world is witnessing an action that has no legal justification, moral virtue or ethical principle - an action that violates not only Cuba's sovereignty but also the most basic precepts of international coexistence. It is a policy rejected by all countries that espouse the rule of law and mutual respect in relations between States.

In this complex and convulsed world that is supposedly pluralistic, free and democratic, the United States is trying to deny my country, Cuba, its rightful place as a sovereign nation. It is as if two centuries of relations between the two countries meant nothing. What is worse, it is as if the cold war had frozen forever on our tiny spit of land and sun, merely because we had committed the "sin" of wishing to be free and truly independent a scarce 90 miles from the most powerful country on the planet.

My homeland has been subjected to hardships probably greater than those suffered by any other country. With the collapse of socialism in Europe, our markets and our sources of raw materials and financing disappeared overnight. The process of overcoming domestic difficulties and reforming the economic and administrative structures conceived at a certain stage of our socialist project was also disrupted by the reinforcement of the policy of isolation and strangulation that our people had already been stoically facing for years.

In the midst of this dangerous combination of elements; despite forecasts, since 1989, of a Cuban collapse, my country has not collapsed, nor will it collapse. We have survived all kinds of strategies, from those promoting terrorist and subversive actions from abroad to those of exerting pressure in different directions in order to reinforce the blockade, which, as I said, this Assembly has rejected for two consecutive years.

This does not mean that the plight of my people is no longer harsh and complex. In recognition of the proven patriotism and national dignity of the Cuban people, this world forum should issue an unequivocal appeal for justice and reject once and for all the cruel hostility to which Cuba has been so long subjected.

The unequal struggle forced upon us for so many years has not mitigated our love of peace. Cuba still aspires to negotiated solutions to its disputes with any country, provided that those solutions are based on sovereign equality and mutual respect. This Organization is well aware of that. We are a mature and flexible people: civilized and faithful to agreements based on equality and sovereignty.

The series of bilateral meetings recently held in New York led to partial solutions to the age-old dispute between Cuba and the United States. The spirit of seriousness and respect that prevailed in those negotiations and the will on the part of both sides to find solutions made it possible to conclude a mutually satisfactory agreement that, if fully implemented, will lay the foundation for the normalization of migratory relations between the two countries.

We desire peace with all our neighbours: peace with dignity. Our sovereignty, our independence and the socialism that we freely chose will never be bargaining chips at any negotiating table, nor will we ever demand concessions of such a nature from any country.

We are increasingly opening ourselves to the world, without demanding or acceding to conditions. A great Power, however, is blockading us - and is blockading its own people and the sons and daughters of my people who live on its territory, preventing them from assisting and rejoining their families. Such cruelty has no parallel in the history of wholesale violations of human rights.

We do not beg, for our national hero, José Martí, the centennial of whose death in our struggle for true independence will come next year, taught us that mankind can never be ruled by cowardice and indifference. And, as he instructed,

> "We ask the world, certain of its reply, whether the sacrifice of a generous people that is immolating itself in its efforts to open up to the world will meet indifference or hard-heartedness from mankind, for whose sake it is acting."

The President: The next speaker is the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Gabon, His Excellency Mr. Jean Ping.

Mr. Ping (Gabon) *(interpretation from French)*: Allow me to begin by conveying to the President, on my own behalf and on that of the Gabonese delegation, warm and brotherly congratulations on his noteworthy election to the presidency of the Assembly. His great experience in international affairs, along with his outstanding intellectual and moral qualities, are for us a guarantee that his presidency will stamp the work of the General Assembly with renewed dynamism.

We wish to express to his predecessor, Mr. Samuel Rudolph Insanally of Guyana, our satisfaction at his decisive actions in the course of the forty-eighth session.

I would also like to reiterate our appreciation and support for Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali, whose competence, rigour and effectiveness in the service of the Organization are well established.

The end of East-West antagonism foreshadowed unexpected horizons of peace and a bright tomorrow. Very quickly, however, the emergence of all kinds of extremism radically changed this picture of the future.

Today the international community is divided between the hope of settling age-old conflicts, concern over the persistence of contemporary conflicts, and preoccupation over the emergence in some places of civil wars born of ethnic or religious tensions. While the risks, directly or indirectly linked to the cold war, of world-wide conflict have faded, armed conflicts continue to sow death and destruction.

The resolution of the Cambodian conflict, the continuation of the Middle East peace process, the favourable progress of the conflict pitting Israel against its neighbours, the settlement of the border conflict between Chad and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya and, above all, the abolition of apartheid in South Africa - to cite only a few examples - give us good reason to be pleased.

Gabon has followed most attentively the current positive developments in the situation in the Middle East. We encourage the parties concerned to hold on to their gains and to pursue the peace process under way until the agreements reached are fully implemented.

With regard to Cambodia, we appeal to all the parties involved to work for the consolidation of national unity and democratic institutions.

Finally, for the first time in several decades, apartheid is not to be found on our agenda. This historic turn of events is the result, first and foremost, of the sacrifices of the South African people themselves and, then again, of the efforts of the international community as a whole. Gabon hails the return of a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa to the concert of free nations.

For the settlement of these conflicts we are indebted primarily to our world Organization, which, free of the burdens of the cold war, seems to have recovered the dynamism that inspired the San Francisco Charter.

The President returned to the Chair.

In this context, the end of the border conflict that for years turned Chad and the Libyan Arab Jamahiriya against each other is an outstanding example of the merits of settling disputes peacefully. The parties to that conflict have abided on all counts by the opinion of the International Court of Justice.

My satisfaction is even greater because of President Omar Bongo's assumption of the chairmanship of the Ad Hoc Committee that was established in 1977 by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) at its fourteenth summit meeting and that is intended to provide a political settlement of that conflict. May this example serve to inspire the many States involved in conflicts to come into harmony with the spirit of the Charter of our Organization.

These reasons for hope notwithstanding, in Africa and in Eastern Europe there are real reasons for concern with regard to the prospects for peace and stability in the world.

With regard to Africa, partial and contradictory analyses aside, we must recognize that the peace and security of our continent are seriously threatened by civil wars and inter-ethnic conflicts.

In Somalia there is no event or initiative that allows us to look to the future with optimism. Quite the contrary: thanks to the ruthlessness of the belligerents, the international community is becoming discouraged and the conflict is becoming entrenched. This is why the Gabonese Government urges the various factions to speed up the process of national reconciliation on the basis of the Addis Ababa Agreements.

The conflict that has been tearing Liberia apart for so many years is still continuing relentlessly, showing hopes for peace to be illusory, hopes that were nurtured by the Agreements signed in Cotonou in July 1993 under the aegis of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). We would venture to hope that the recent Akossombo agreement, signed in Ghana, the eleventh of its kind, will lead to a lasting settlement of the conflict.

Thoughts of these zones of conflict lead me now to pay a tribute, on behalf of my country, to the Angolan Government for its determination to pursue negotiation. Gabon encourages the efforts to restore peace in Angola, in accordance with the peace Agreements concluded to date and with Security Council resolutions 864 (1993) and 932 (1994). Here we appeal to UNITA to take advantage of the opportunity offered by the Lusaka talks to put an end to this war that has been casting a pall over Angola for almost 20 years now.

On Rwanda, I reiterate the appeal of the Government of Gabon to all the sons and daughters of that country to adopt a spirit of tolerance, harmony and renewed peace and begin at last to work towards the same goal: the reconstruction of their battered, devastated country. In that context, Gabon has not failed to express its support for the humanitarian activities undertaken by the United Nations through the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR), by France through its Operation Turquoise, and by many non-governmental organizations. My country has also called for more effective and persistent participation by the Organization of African Unity (OAU) and the United Nations in the peace process aimed at putting an end to the tragedy.

Having hailed the welcome initiatives of non-governmental organizations and of Gabonese citizens to ease the suffering of our brethren in Rwanda, my Government has decided, first, to make a voluntary contribution - the funds for which have been released - to the United Nations Special Fund for Rwanda. Secondly, it will provide assistance to the afflicted populations, principally in the form of food products, clothing and medicine, which my Government is committed to sending to Kigali by its own means. The "air-bridge" for that purpose opened on 18 September 1994, when we delivered the initial portion of this aid to the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Rwanda. Thirdly, if the need arises, we shall take in Rwandese orphans, in collaboration with international organizations such as the United Nations Children's Fund and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

In eastern Europe, the horror continues in Bosnia and Herzegovina; the negative result of the recent referendum is not likely to allow the speedy settlement of this conflict, which has gone on far too long. Here again, Gabon appeals to the parties to the conflict to bring peace to their region.

These tragedies have put the Organization to a harsh test. But, despite the uncertainty of the post-cold-war period, the United Nations remains a priority forum for creating and nurturing the collective search for peace. To do this, the passivity displayed by nearly all participants in international life must be replaced by a determination to take preventive action. In that connection, the Agenda for Peace outlines the action that needs to be taken to avert, as quickly as possible, situations that could give rise to conflicts, particularly action in the framework of preventive diplomacy.

For its part, Africa has not been idle in this sphere. Indeed, our major concern is reflected in the creation by the OAU of machinery for the prevention, management and settlement of conflicts. In the same spirit, the States of central Africa have established a permanent mechanism dealing with questions of security in central Africa, with a mandate to promote confidence-building measures among member States in line with the principles of the Charter.

The agreement on a non-aggression pact at the September 1993 Libreville meeting, the signing ceremony for which has just taken place in Yaoundé, Cameroon, attests eloquently to the dedication of our States to the values of peace and solidarity. But to be more effective operationally, and to play an active role in the decentralization of peace-keeping operations, this machinery should benefit from logistical and technical assistance from the United Nations.

To take due account of the new international political landscape I have described, the desired developments must be multidimensional, dealing not only with the structure of the United Nations, but also with its activities. I am pleased to note that there have been various initiatives to that end, including the vast process of restructuring the principal organs, which was begun two years ago. This has been reflected in such things as the beginnings of a debate on the reform of the Security Council, with a view to enlarging its membership and ensuring equitable representation of Member States. Gabon is in favour of such reform.

It is agreed today that international peace and security are no longer limited to political and military considerations, but that they encompass such diverse areas as the economic, social, humanitarian and environmental spheres. We think the time has come for this vision, which accords with the Charter, to be reflected in reality. To be sure, since the founding of the

United Nations mankind has made major economic, scientific and technological progress. But, despite these notable advances, some parts of the world continue to live in poverty and destitution.

For Africa, the United Nations has set up two successive programmes: the United Nations Programme for African Economic Recovery and Development, and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s. Both were intended to contribute to the continent's sustained economic growth.

While the African States have fulfilled their obligations under these programmes, we have to say that the industrialized countries have failed to honour their commitments. It is also regrettable that the Rio Summit on environment and development, which had given rise to new hope and which for the first time had incorporated the concept of sustainable development, is suffering from a glaring lack of international support. Our expectations are not being met with respect to the financing needed to implement Agenda 21.

The Agenda for Development proposed by the Secretary-General should fill these gaps once the international community realizes the interdependence of our interests. I want to reaffirm Gabon's commitment to the major principles in that Agenda: peace, the foundation of development; the economy, the engine of progress; the environment, a basis for sustainability; social justice, a pillar of society; and democracy, the model of good governance. Yet beyond those principles we must study ways and means to implement the Agenda for Development, scrupulously taking into account the major concerns of the African continent.

In any event, for the countries of the South, the success of existing or future machinery for cooperation will depend on the role reserved for development activities and for the reduction of inequity. Here, the new World Trade Organization, which from January 1995 will replace the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, will have to respond to the needs arising from differences in the level of development of the rich countries and of the less-well-off countries.

After 30 years of independence, we must observe that African States do not always have the means to satisfy their peoples' health, educational and cultural concerns. Numerous factors contribute to keeping our countries in the spiral of underdevelopment. The first is that our countries are unable to process the commodities they produce or set their prices. This leads to a drastic deterioration of the terms of trade, because the prices of raw materials are not indexed to those of the finished products.

Moreover, the external debt and the cost of servicing it are a serious obstacle to the development of African countries, as is clear from the ratio of debt to exports of goods and services for Africa as a whole. Gabon, too, is affected by this situation, and for several years has been engaging in structural adjustment programmes. These programmes have not always yielded the expected results, especially since our economy is marked by, *inter alia*, excessive dependence on the outside world and by growing public and private debt.

In this context, on 12 January 1994, there was a 50 per cent devaluation of the parity of the currency of the African States of the franc zone compared to that of the French franc. At the time of the devaluation all the African countries of the franc zone were given equal treatment, but today discrimination between those States is being exercised. Gabon thus remains the only country which, because of its intermediate revenues, is refused access to the loan windows in flexible conditions, on the pretext that its per capita gross national product is too high.

It is true that devaluation could have some positive aspects, including a relaunching of investment, more competitive exports, a revitalization of the agricultural sector and a reduction of imports. But we believe that it is necessary, indeed urgent, to receive assistance in order to establish new machinery to help the most disadvantaged and the most vulnerable persons.

Our common destiny and international solidarity should prompt us to transcend our differences and give priority only to meeting the needs and ensuring the well-being of mankind. The interdependence that flows from this dictates that the industrialized countries, with their technological know-how and financial resources, should support the efforts of the weakest and most disadvantaged to participate in the establishment of this new global economy.

These days, States are confronted with trans-border scourges which individually they are incapable of stemming. That is true of the phenomenon of increasing flows of refugees and illegal immigrants, the illegal drug trade, malaria and the AIDS pandemic. Joint and

coordinated international action is required to attack the roots of these evils.

It is the custom today for everyone to emphasize the importance of the trilogy of democracy, development and human rights. In that respect - and specifically concerning democracy - Gabon, which was one of the very first African countries to return to political pluralism, has been making an effort for several years now to establish new institutions adapted to democratic rules and to promote the emergence of a genuine state of law. But we are aware that time is needed to achieve this.

In this framework, recently, in the presence of international observers, negotiations were held between representatives of the Opposition and representatives of the Government to seek ways and means to establish democracy by consensus - the sole guarantee of peace and social cohesion.

Unquestionably, the founding fathers of the United Nations wished it above all to respond positively to the questions the peoples were asking about the best way to organize international life. The statement of purposes and principles within the very first provisions of the Charter eloquently attests to this. Hence it is up to the United Nations system and Member States to ensure that at each session the General Assembly takes a decisive step towards the attainment of these purposes and principles that we hold so dear. I hope that this will be done at the forty-ninth session.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation of Kenya, His Excellency Mr. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka.

Mr. Musyoka (Kenya): Let me join other representatives who have spoken before in congratulating you, Sir, on your unanimous election to the presidency of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. Your election to this high office is a demonstration both of the confidence that Member States have in you and of the respect they have for your beautiful country, Côte d'Ivoire. We are confident that under your wise guidance our deliberations at this session will achieve the desired results.

I also wish to pay tribute to your predecessor, Ambassador Insanally of Guyana, for steering the forty-eighth session to a successful conclusion. During his presidency, Ambassador Insanally undertook several initiatives aimed at strengthening the General Assembly and improving its relationship with the other organs of the United Nations. We thank him for his dynamic and imaginative leadership.

May I also extend our congratulations to Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, the Secretary-General, on the untiring and visionary manner in which he is managing the affairs of the Organization.

The peace dividend expected after the end of the cold war, four years ago, is yet to be realized. On the contrary, the world has been faced with the escalation of new conflicts and in some cases the intensification of old conflicts. The disappearance of the great ideological rivalry between the East and the West has enabled the United Nations more constructively to play its central role of facilitating conflict resolution and maintaining international peace and security. The emerging international situation has however brought with it new challenges to which the international community should respond in a dynamic manner and within the framework of the United Nations Charter.

Kenya supports the ongoing efforts aimed at reforming the United Nations with a view to adapting to the new challenges, and hopes that these efforts will be intensified during this session of the General Assembly. We welcome progress already made in the reform of the economic and social sectors of the Organization as well as the revitalization of the working of the General Assembly. However, more needs to be done, particularly in the context of the new Agenda for Development. Furthermore, a great deal still remains to be done in reforming the Security Council to enhance its effectiveness, its transparency and its relationship with the General Assembly as well as Member States. The open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on the question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council has been able to highlight, substantially, areas where the Security Council needs to be reformed. It is our hope that the Working Group will reach a consensus on this vital exercise before the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations.

The role of the Security Council has become critical in the new era. Kenya is cognizant, and appreciative, of the special responsibilities entrusted to the five permanent members of the Security Council. However, the circumstances which led to the creation of the present membership structure have changed. It is therefore crucial that the membership of the Council reflect these

changes and incorporate regional interests for a more balanced distribution of seats.

The United Nations is currently involved in an unprecedented number of peace-keeping operations. This clearly underlines the growing confidence of the international community in the role of the United Nations. During the forty-seventh session, the Assembly adopted the Agenda for Peace, which emphasized preventive diplomacy, peacemaking and peace-keeping. The most rewarding parts of this three-pronged strategy are the first two - namely, preventive diplomacy and peacemaking. This is especially true, when we consider that mobilization for peace-keeping is usually very slow. We are therefore convinced that the United Nations should invest more in preventive diplomacy and development to avoid the human catastrophes we have witnessed recently in many parts of the world, particularly Africa.

We happily welcome the victory of democracy in South Africa and the dismantling of apartheid. Kenya heartily congratulates President Nelson Mandela, his Government and the people of South Africa on the peaceful transition to a new democratic and multiracial South Africa. We are also delighted with the peaceful resolution of the territorial dispute between Chad and Libya. The positive developments in Mozambique and Burundi towards peaceful resolution of long-standing conflicts are indeed commendable. A comprehensive settlement of the Middle East conflict is now on a steady course with the ongoing implementation of the accord between Israel and Palestine and the recently concluded peace agreement between Jordan and Israel. We congratulate all the parties and encourage them to widen and intensify the peace processes.

International peace and security can flourish only if peace and stability exist in individual countries. The fundamental responsibility of ensuring peace and stability lies with the individual countries themselves. The Charter of the United Nations clearly underscores that responsibility under the principles of sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity and non-interference in the internal affairs of States.

With the recent resurgence of problems based on ethnicity and of nationalism, sustained effort is required at the national level to forge national consensus. All nations have to build their democracies on the basis of their national circumstances, experiences, traditions and aspirations, but within the context of the universal values and norms of democracy, good governance and human rights.

The international community also has an important role to play in the support of national efforts towards the strengthening of democratic processes, sustainable development, peace and security. Very often, international conflicts are fanned by the struggle for the sharing of scant resources and public offices in the absence of a wide economic base to absorb competing interests. Development needs, therefore, have to be addressed from a wider perspective. The international community's support for institutional capacity-building and human resources development is pivotal to sustainable development, peace and security.

Over the last year, the international community has witnessed the intensification of some perennial conflicts. The experiences of Rwanda, Somalia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Sudan and Liberia clearly demonstrate that there is no substitute for a political settlement negotiated between the parties to the conflicts. At the same time, the international community, particularly the United Nations, should be tireless in its efforts to assist parties to reach lasting solutions to these conflicts.

In this connection, regional bodies need to be strengthened, as their role in supporting development and facilitating solutions to national conflicts cannot be overstressed. The escalation of conflicts in one country has left neighbouring countries flooded with refugees and other spill-over effects, including the spread of banditry and illegal arms. Accordingly, we welcome the draft declaration on the strengthening of the cooperation between the United Nations and the regional organizations, and arrangements in the maintenance of international peace and security. Adoption of that declaration at this session of the General Assembly will be an important milestone towards strengthening the role of the regional bodies in the maintenance of international peace and security under the overall responsibility of the Security Council.

The magnitude of the Rwandese human disaster calls for extraordinary efforts in the mobilization of the United Nations system and the international community to stop the suffering of the Rwandese people and to restore normalcy to that unfortunate country. The decision to scale down the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda at that critical time contributed to the vacuum that resulted in the estimated loss of 1 million lives, with about 4 million people being internally displaced or fleeing as refugees. The experience of Rwanda calls for fundamental changes to United Nations peace-keeping

operations to ensure an adequate, timely and effective response.

We take this opportunity to commend the neighbouring countries for accommodating so many refugees and offering logistical support for humanitarian operations. We also commend the countries, international organizations and non-governmental organizations that have been extending critical humanitarian support. We are encouraged by the assurance of the new Government that it will foster the reconciliation of the Rwandese people. This calls for the intensification of international effort aimed at restoring normalcy in Rwanda. Kenya, for its part, has continued to play a facilitating role in the supply of humanitarian assistance to Rwanda.

On Somalia, we strongly believe that the continued presence of United Nations peace-keeping personnel is critical in the pursuit of peace and security in the country if we are to avoid the deterioration of a situation that is already unacceptable. We note with concern the Secretary-General's report on the growing incidence of violence and attacks on United Nations soldiers as well as the inability of the Somali faction leaders to agree on a formula for the creation of an interim central authority. While we commend the efforts of the international community in the search for a settlement to the Somali conflict, we are greatly concerned about the failure of the faction leaders to utilize the opportunities afforded by the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM) and the Organization of African Unity, as well as the neighbouring countries, to bring an end to the conflict.

Somalia is a sister country with which we share an 800-kilometre border, family relations, and ethnic and cultural affinities. The very heavy influx of Somali refugees into Kenya has had a devastating effect on the most ecologically fragile parts of the country. The refugee burden on my country is still excessively high, with about 300,000 registered refugees. Kenya is cooperating closely with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in accelerating the resettlement and voluntary repatriation of refugees. Physical and social infrastructures have also been overextended due to excessive usage.

The national efforts aimed at mitigating the negative effects caused by the influx of refugees in the border region are constrained by the magnitude of the problem and the competing security, administrative and development commitments in the area. In this regard, while appreciating various forms of assistance from the international donor community, including the non-governmental organizations, to address the problem, Kenya further appeals to the United Nations and the donor community to assist in the financing of the rehabilitation of the physical and social infrastructure as well as the restoration of the region's ecosystem.

The border region security dimension is another issue of great concern to Kenya. Our people and our security personnel have been subjected to numerous acts of banditry by armed gangs crossing into Kenya from Somalia. For this reason, we are reiterating our request to the Secretary-General to reinforce the UNOSOM patrols along the Somalia side of the border so as to complement the efforts of Kenyan security personnel on our side of the border. We believe that the joint security efforts will significantly scale down the flow of armed gangs and individuals into the Kenyan side.

The problem in the Sudan has been of great concern not only to Kenya and the neighbouring countries, but also to the international community. After four rounds of negotiations in the past year, it has become apparent that the regional peace efforts spearheaded by Presidents Yoweri Museveni of Uganda, Isaias Afewerki of Eritrea and Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia, under the chairmanship of President Daniel T. Arap Moi of Kenya, within the framework of Inter-Governmental Authority on Drought and Development (IGAD), have so far not been able to bridge the differences between the parties to the conflict. We appeal to all parties involved in the conflict to be flexible in the search for a just and lasting solution. The international community has an important role to play not only in terms of humanitarian assistance but also in facilitating the settlement of the fundamental differences between the parties. In this regard, Kenya is very grateful to the Governments of Norway, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and the many others that have generously provided material and financial assistance to the process.

On Bosnia and Herzegovina, we are greatly concerned that despite many serious attempts at a negotiated settlement no solution is in sight. Kenya strongly appeals to the combatants to opt for a negotiated settlement for the sake of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Kenya is substantially involved in United Nations peace-keeping activities, having contributed military and civilian police personnel to various peace-keeping operations world wide. The enormous rise in the number

and scope of peace-keeping operations demands that the ability of the United Nations Secretariat to cope with such large-scale operations be strengthened.

While peace-keeping will continue to be a vital responsibility of the United Nations, the adequate financing of these operations, which now represents a substantial portion of the United Nations budget, is critical to their success. In this regard, we urge Member States to pay their assessed contributions in full and on time in order to enable the Organization to respond effectively to the enormous challenges posed by peace-keeping operations.

The budgetary system for the peace-keeping operations also requires improvement. Notwithstanding the fact that peace-keeping operations are temporary by nature, it is cumbersome to approve budgets for periods of one to three months and usually retroactively. The current practice of piecemeal budgets compounds United Nations cash-flow problems, leading to the stifling of the operations of the Organization. Consequently, troop-contributing countries continue to subsidize United Nations peace-keeping operations at great sacrifice, a situation which cannot be sustained, especially by developing countries.

My delegation is also concerned over the growing number of fatalities and injuries among United Nations peace-keeping soldiers and other personnel deployed by the Organization. In this regard, the ongoing efforts to elaborate a convention on responsibility for attacks on such personnel and measures to ensure that the culprits are brought to justice is a positive response by the international community to this problem.

The world's economy continues to reflect sharp contrasts between countries and regions, with the industrialized countries, China and the South-East Asia region showing slight to rapid economic growth rates. The situation in Africa, on the other hand, is still of great concern, as the region's economy continues to show no signs of tangible recovery. The continent remains highly vulnerable to adverse international economic policies as well as to natural calamities, such as drought and epidemics, owing to its limited capacity to develop institutions and systems to cushion populations from these types of calamities. This situation has been compounded by the persistent recurrence of drought, debt burden, a decline in financial flows, low commodity prices, and the implementation of painful but necessary economic reforms and the uncertainties associated with major political reforms.

My country and many other African countries have in the past few years undertaken fundamental reforms to create, among other things, an environment conducive to encouraging investment flows as a necessary ingredient for economic growth and development. This underscores the determination of the African countries to speed up the recovery and growth of the economies. However, the sustainability of these efforts requires increased international assistance to facilitate an early realization of the objectives of the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa. We hope that at this time, when many developing countries are implementing major structural reforms and the liberalization of trade policies, the successful conclusion of the Uruguay Round and the setting-up of the World Trade Organization will lead to the elimination of all trade barriers and the expansion of international trade.

The mounting debt burden of the African countries, especially those of sub-Saharan Africa, continues to be a major constraint to economic growth and development. The problem of debt in Africa is worsened by the persistent low economic growth rates of the continent's economies. It is evident that the various measures taken by the international community on bilateral and multilateral bases to mitigate the situation, though welcome, have achieved limited results. Kenya believes that a lasting solution to the debt burden is a bold initiative for an effective reduction or cancellation of the bilateral and multilateral debt of the low-income countries, particularly in Africa.

The "Agenda for Development", as an instrument for the promotion of an action-oriented approach to economic growth and development parallel to the "Agenda for Peace" as presented by the Secretary-General, should be given paramount attention by this Assembly. The essence of it should be the recognition that development is a fundamental human right and that peace and development are intertwined and mutually reinforcing. Kenya affirms, however, that the State continues to bear the primary responsibility for its development while recognizing the importance of the complementary role of the international community.

Kenya subscribes fully to the view that the new Agenda for Development should be people-centred. While recognizing the importance of overall economic development needs, action programmes must give appropriate priority to the education, training, health and welfare of the people. The Agenda should take into account the fundamental role of science and technology

in socio-economic development, particularly for developing countries. Indeed, the new Agenda for Development should become an instrument for promoting a new consensus on international cooperation for development, rather than a process of negotiations for financial needs.

Kenya welcomes the finalization of the elaboration of an international convention to combat desertification. The degradation of fragile dry lands is increasing at an accelerated rate and claiming millions of hectares every year. The afflicted countries are fully aware of their responsibilities to fight this imminent threat, but their efforts will not bear fruit without the support of the international community. The mobilization of resources as called for in Agenda 21 remains critical. Commitments of new and additional financial resources to fund environmental projects, as agreed upon in Rio, should be honoured. My delegation welcomes the recent restructuring and replenishment of the Global Environmental Facility as a positive step towards the fulfilment of some of the Rio commitments.

My delegation welcomes the establishment of the Office of Internal Oversight Services, headed by an Under-Secretary-General. We hope that the establishment of this Office will lead to greater efficiency and the reduction of waste and mismanagement, which the international community can ill afford. We also hope that the United Nations will now foster greater transparency in the awarding of United Nations contracts and in the procurement of goods and services, taking into account the cost-effectiveness of obtaining such goods and services from sources closer to the recipient countries.

As a country that is host to one of the United Nations centres, Kenya wishes to reiterate its commitment to cooperating with the United Nations in its efforts to strengthen the United Nations Centre in Nairobi, the capacity of which remains underutilized despite its enormous potential. In this connection, Kenya urges that the permanent secretariats of environmentally-related conventions, including those on biodiversity, climate change and desertification, be located in Nairobi, taking into full account the need for utilization of the capacity of the new secretariats and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) as well as the human-settlement secretariats based in the United Nations Centre in Nairobi. Indeed, this would be consistent with the wish of the General Assembly and the governing bodies of the two organizations concerned, which have called for the strengthening, harmonization, cost-effectiveness and enhancement of the efficiency of UNEP and other United Nations programmes.

The recently concluded International Conference on Population and Development in Cairo clearly underlines the resolve of the international community to coordinate actions and strategies on social development as envisaged in the United Nations Charter. The resolve of the international community to deal with the problems of population and development in accordance with the Cairo Programme of Action, which was adopted by consensus, gives us a strong basis for tackling population problems.

Kenya associates itself with the preparations and anticipated positive results of the forthcoming World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen. We hope that the Summit will come up with programmes and commitments which will effectively address the problems of poverty and social integration and lead to sustainable economic growth and broad-based social development. We are of the view that national action and international cooperation should give priority to the eradication of poverty, the elimination of obstacles to economic and social development, the expansion of productive employment, and the creation of a favourable international economic and social environment.

The Fourth World Conference on Women, to be held in Beijing, China, in 1995 offers a suitable opportunity to build on the successes of the 1985 Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies and to solidify the gains of women in all spheres of life. All necessary steps at the national, regional and international levels should be taken to develop a political, economic, social and cultural environment conducive to the full integration of women into sustainable processes of development.

Kenya also looks forward to the successful outcome of the second United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (HABITAT II) to be held in Istanbul, Turkey, in 1996. In order to ensure broad-based national preparations for the Conference, the national Steering Committee has prepared a work programme incorporating the mobilization of action in the shelter sector so as to create public awareness. My delegation acknowledges the significant progress made in the preparatory process by the HABITAT II secretariat in Nairobi, under the direction of the Secretary-General of the Conference, Mr. Wally N'Dow. However, financial limitations are hampering elements of the preparatory process. We hope that these constraints will soon be overcome.

Any durable international system must have a sound legal regime, backed by principles of respect for and compliance with the rule of law at domestic and international levels. The recognition by States of their obligation to abide by these principles is not only an indispensable requirement, but also forms the fabric of international norms and standards which guide lawful international behaviour.

It is in this context, therefore, that we hail the decision to hold an International Congress on International Law in March 1995 here in New York, under the framework of the United Nations Decade of International Law.

In 1989, Kenya joined the growing number of nations that have ratified the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea. A few weeks from today, on 16 November 1994, the world community will witness the entry into force of this Convention. This long-awaited event, which marks the culmination of a process started many years ago, is a significant milestone in the human endeavour to create a new legal order for the oceans.

African States do not possess the requisite scientific knowledge, technological capacity and management skills to be able to explore and exploit the marine living and non-living resources. The Convention, as well as Agenda 21, both of which furnish the basic blueprint for cooperation in marine and ocean areas, have laid emphasis on the significance of the development of manpower, technological capacity and training, particularly in the developing countries. We believe that these and other allied problems should be addressed to enable African countries to derive benefits from the rights and opportunities offered by the Convention. It is our hope that, following the successful conclusion and adoption of the agreement on the implementation of deep seabed mining, all States will now become parties to the Convention, in order to secure universal participation.

In conclusion, we feel confident that, as we approach the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, the international community has the requisite resources and talents to deal effectively with the global concerns and challenges facing it. In particular, the Organization will have to address the crucial issues of maintenance of international peace and security, sustainable development, the environment, humanitarian issues and reform of the United Nations. In conformity with the aspirations of the Charter expressed in the words "We the peoples", everybody throughout the world has high expectations of this Organization. We cannot and must not let them down.

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I now call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Mozambique, His Excellency Mr. Pascoal Manuel Mocumbi.

Mr Mocumbi (Mozambique): Mr. President, on behalf of my Government and on my own behalf, I wish to express my sincere congratulations to you on your unanimous election as President of the United Nations General Assembly at its forty-ninth session. We are delighted to see a son of Africa, a distinguished diplomat from Côte d'Ivoire, a country with which Mozambique entertains friendly relations, presiding over our deliberations. I should like to pledge my delegation's cooperation in the discharge of your duties. I am confident that under your able leadership our deliberations will be successful.

I should also like to avail myself of this opportunity to convey through you, Mr. President, my utmost appreciation to your predecessor, His Excellency Ambassador Samuel Insanally, for the brilliant manner in which he conducted the work of the previous General Assembly session.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations, His Excellency Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, deserves our warmest felicitations for the competent manner in which he has been discharging his duties. The people and the Government of the Republic of Mozambique remain grateful to his untiring efforts and dedication to the cause of peace in my country.

Our participation in this forty-ninth session of the General Assembly takes place at a crucial moment for my country. In about three weeks' time the people of Mozambique will cast their ballots in the first multiparty elections scheduled for 27 and 28 October.

The electoral campaign was inaugurated on 22 September last. To this end, 14 political parties, including two coalitions, are running for parliament and 12 candidates are contesting the presidential elections.

The electoral census shows that more than 6.3 million people of an estimated 7.5 million eligible voters have been registered. Given the existing difficulties deriving from 16 years of armed conflict, we believe the number of registered voters is quite significant and encouraging.

A code of conduct aimed at ensuring that the electoral process is carried out harmoniously was signed by presidential candidates before the beginning of the campaign. A similar document was also signed by the 14 contesting political parties. Both codes establish specific rules and guidelines which must be observed during the campaign. In these documents, all parties have, *inter alia*, pledged to commit themselves to abide by and respect fully the results of the general elections, once they are certified to have been free and fair by the United Nations.

The forthcoming multiparty general elections represent the culmination of a long and delicate process of implementation of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique, signed in Rome in October 1992. The cantonment and demobilization of forces, including the dissolution of the High Command of the former Mozambican Armed Forces, has been concluded. In addition, the Government has transferred all its military assets and infrastructure to the new army. The formation of the agreed 30,000-strong Mozambican Defense Force (FADM) is also under way. However, owing to logistical and material difficulties facing the execution of this commitment, we will have a single army of only about 10,000 men by the time of the elections.

My Government appreciates the fact that a mission of the Security Council has recently visited Mozambique to verify on the ground the status of the implementation of the General Peace Agreement and the performance of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique (ONUMOZ). We took note with satisfaction of the conclusion arrived at by the mission, according to which conditions exists in Mozambique for the holding of free and fair elections, and that the United Nations will immediately endorse the results of these elections, as soon as they are declared free and fair. My Government attaches great importance to the need for ONUMOZ to certify that the signatories of the Rome Agreement have fully respected their commitments regarding the complete demobilization of their forces, so as to ensure a climate free of fear and intimidation during and after the elections.

As we move closer to the final stage of the implementation of the General Peace Agreement, the people of Mozambique look forward to a lasting peace and stability under which national unity will be preserved and national reconstruction will be carried on as a matter of priority for the progress and prosperity of our country. That is why my Government and my party, FRELIMO, believe that the winner of the forthcoming elections should be able to form a government which, taking into account the best interests of the nation, will select men and women - irrespective of their political affiliations - with proven qualities of leadership and with a recognized capacity in the management of government affairs who are dedicated to serving the people and preserving peace and stability in the country.

As President Chissano stated about 10 days ago, on the opening day of the electoral campaign, the government that will emerge from the forthcoming elections should be one that brings together all Mozambican citizens - a government that should truly serve the nation. He reiterated that, should he win the election, he would be guided by the ideals of reconciliation, dialogue and tolerance among all Mozambicans. That means that his government would seek permanent dialogue with the opposition in order to achieve consensus on the major issues and policies facing our country.

We believe that the winner must commit himself to strengthening institutional mechanisms that can ensure an effective participation by the opposition in the decision-making process, particularly within the framework of the Assembly of the Republic. Every guarantee will be extended to the opposition so as to enable it to play a meaningful and active role in the political life of the country.

That is our vision of the post-electoral future in Mozambique, a vision that will give high priority to the issue of unity and reconciliation, peace and stability, and rehabilitation and development in our country.

In the meantime, it is our strong belief that the international community should encourage and put pressure on the parties to faithfully implement the Rome Agreement and to pre-empt any move aimed at renegotiating the Agreement or undermining its implementation. *Pacta sunt servanda*. With the elections less than a month away, it is imperative that the signatories to the General Peace Agreement and the international community as a whole do not lose perspective and depart from the legal and political framework of that important peace-making instrument. If we are to witness a successful outcome of the peace process in Mozambique, it is essential that the signatories of the Rome Agreement respect fully their obligations and refrain from raising issues, conditions or preconditions in the implementation of the Agreement. The international community must therefore exert the

necessary positive influence over the parties to abide by their commitments under the Rome Agreement.

My Government is determined to fulfil its obligations under the Agreement. In the course of 19 years of independence, FRELIMO and the Government of Mozambique have always respected their commitments, both at home and at the international level. We have successfully established multiparty democracy in Mozambique; we have successfully embarked on economic reforms; and we have successfully concluded the General Peace Agreement. Today, at this critical juncture, we are once again ready to honour our obligations and responsibilities.

Mozambique is emerging from 16 years of a devastating conflict that has deeply rent its economic and social fabric. Therefore, apart from the relentless efforts that the Government has been deploying in honouring its obligations within the framework of the General Peace Agreement, our endeavour is also directed towards the monumental task of national reconstruction. This noble task constitutes a basic component of the whole process towards a lasting peace in Mozambique. Our success in national reconstruction will greatly contribute to the political, economic and social stability of the country.

The advent of peace in 1992 paved the way for the Government to fully embark upon the implementation of the economic recovery programme that was launched in early 1987. It is due to this undertaking that in 1993 our gross domestic product increased by 5.6 per cent as a result of a significant growth by basic economic sectors: agriculture, 8 per cent; transport and communications, 10 per cent; trade, 17 per cent; and construction, 3 per cent.

Likewise, the rate of inflation dropped to 30 per cent in 1993, as compared to 165 per cent in 1987. Economic forecasts show that the conditions are present to reduce even further the inflation rate in the years to come. This is an encouraging trend in the performance of our economy that provides confidence in its continued growth.

With regard to investment opportunities, the combination of two years of peace and wide-ranging economic reforms heralds a new era for Mozambican private-sector development. The role of foreign direct investment and other fields of cooperation with the international business community is recognized as being crucial to the success of national reconstruction in Mozambique.

Moreover, my Government is engaged in rehabilitating the economic and social infrastructures destroyed by war. The reintegration of demobilized soldiers into civilian life, the resettlement of refugees and displaced persons, and the rehabilitation of socio-economic infrastructures such as roads, bridges, health centres, commercial networks, schools and water supplies are real challenges that will require the special attention of the government that will emerge from the forthcoming elections.

In this context, we attach great importance to the ongoing demining process, as it will contribute to the normalization of life throughout the country, particularly to the resumption of agricultural production in the rural areas. This task is both delicate and enormous, bearing in mind the nature of the conflict that ravaged Mozambique and given the size of the territory. We therefore wish to reiterate our appeal to the international community to continue, in the light of General Assembly resolution 48/7 of 19 October 1993, to render its generous assistance in the form of financial, material, technical support and needed expertise for the mine-clearance programme in Mozambique.

My delegation welcomes the call for a moratorium on export of land-mines and endorses the appeal contained in the 1994 report of the Secretary-General on the work of the Organization for the international community to take appropriate measures to limit the production, use and sale of anti-personnel land-mines with a view to achieving their complete ban.

Since the last session of the General Assembly, the southern African region has witnessed an unprecedented historical event. My delegation wishes to join the previous speakers in welcoming a free and democratic South Africa back into the family of nations. With the presence of President Mandela in this Assembly Hall this morning, we honour the people of South Africa, all the men and women in southern Africa, and people all over the world who have contributed to the struggle for the elimination of the abominable system of apartheid.

The accession to power of a democratically elected Government in South Africa represents the dawning of a new era not only in that sister country but also in the African continent in general. It is our firm expectation to see all the people of South Africa, regardless of their colour or social background, learn how to live together in harmony.

The new South Africa represents the end of the policy of destabilization in southern Africa and the setting up of a peaceful environment at the regional level, which will certainly lead to a fruitful cooperation among the States of the region in their quest for progress and economic development.

The eradication of the apartheid system in South Africa and the consolidation of multi-party democracy in the countries of the region have paved the way for the establishment of a climate of peace and stability in southern Africa. The countries of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), in building their community, are pursuing their joint efforts towards common regional security by addressing issues of conflict prevention and conflict resolution. The prospects of lasting peace and stability in southern Africa will allow us the opportunity to redouble our efforts within the SADC region in our search for progress. Furthermore, peace and stability in southern Africa will ensure our participation as equal partners in development cooperation with other regional economic groupings.

The present session of the General Assembly provides us with an excellent opportunity for a joint assessment of current international political and socio-economic developments. We note with concern that the end of the cold war has not meant the end of armed conflicts around the world. Indeed, armed conflicts continue to proliferate, especially at the regional level, where they constitute a real threat to international peace and security.

In this context, my delegation is particularly concerned by the tragedy and untold suffering which are taking place in the African country of Rwanda. Thousands of innocent people have fallen victim to violence, and as a result thousands more have been forced to leave the country, thus sparking another humanitarian crisis in our conflict-torn continent. We in Mozambique, having experienced a long-lasting conflict, wish to appeal to all parties concerned in Rwanda to settle their differences through dialogue. Only dialogue can bring peace and an end to the tragic situation and human suffering in that martyred country.

Peace in Angola cannot be delayed any longer. While we appreciate the role played by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, and his recent initiatives to bring about a successful outcome at the Lusaka Talks, we still believe that the United Nations should redouble its efforts aimed at putting pressure on UNITA to respect the Bicesse Accords fully and abide by their letter and spirit. My delegation appeals to UNITA to lay down its weapons and seek to achieve its political objectives through dialogue and national reconciliation as a legalized political party.

In the light of Security Council resolutions 864 (1993) of 15 September 1993 and 932 (1994) of 30 June 1994, the United Nations has a moral obligation to exhort UNITA to negotiate with the necessary seriousness, and in good faith, and to cooperate with the Government of Angola on an expeditious conclusion of negotiations under way in Lusaka. We further welcome Security Council resolution 945 (1994) of 29 September 1994 which, *inter alia*, calls upon both parties to honour the commitments already made by them at the Lusaka Peace Talks and urges them to complete their negotiations as soon as possible and to make every necessary effort to have the Lusaka Agreement formally signed before 31 October 1994.

In the Middle East, we note with satisfaction the implementation of the peace accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), which have resulted in autonomy for Gaza and Jericho and the return of the PLO leader to his motherland. In the same manner, we believe that the recent Declaration signed by Jordan and Israel is a significant step forward in the relaxation of tensions in the region. The international community should continue to support these developments for the restoration of peace and mutual confidence in the Middle East. We encourage Israel and Syria to continue negotiations in order to conclude an early agreement on issues which for so long have been a source of conflict between the two countries.

The question of East Timor continues to be of grave concern to the international community. My Government wishes to express its support for all initiatives for a genuine dialogue conducive to the achievement of self-determination by the people of East Timor.

We have been following with keen interest the ongoing debate on the restructuring of the United Nations, in particular the flowing ideas within the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council. We believe that the expansion of the Council must reflect the growing need for justice and a balance of interests among nations and continents, with emphasis on increased permanent membership for developing countries in general and Africa in particular. To this end, we should sofar as possible work during the

current session of the General Assembly to achieve consensus on this issue.

In our opinion, the adequate representation of developing countries on the Security Council will rectify imbalances deriving from the current composition of this body and ensure its efficiency and legitimacy. Above all, it will confer a democratic nature on the decisions taken by that organ. In this context, my delegation fully subscribes to the African common position on this issue adopted by the Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the Organization of African Unity (OAU) on 29 September.

Since last year's debate on this issue, some countries have been singled out as qualifying for additional permanent membership on the Security Council. This year a number of countries have described Brazil as meeting the requirements for permanent membership in the framework of these reforms. My delegation fully shares that view.

The presence of the United Nations Operation in Mozambique offers an opportunity to address the issue of peace-keeping operations. As we have stated on several occasions, peace-keeping forces will succeed only if they strictly adhere to the fundamental principles which guide them and scrupulously respect the terms of reference of the mission for which they have been established.

It is our considered position that there is no universal formula for the success of each and every peace-keeping mission. In this connection, we feel that, though we may recognize the basic rules that govern peace-keeping activities, it is important to bear in mind specific situations and concrete agreements that have to be fully observed in each case. In other words, we cannot prescribe the same medicine for every kind of disease. This could be a prescription for death rather than for recovery, a recipe for disaster rather than for success. We believe that it is extremely important for the United Nations always to take into account the need to safeguard the sovereignty of the State concerned. Where there is a Government, even with weak institutions, peace-keeping missions should work in close cooperation and consultation with the local authorities and respect and strengthen those institutions, rather than try to weaken or undermine them.

The International Conference on Population and Development held in Cairo last month was a landmark in the efforts to control world-wide population growth in favour of sustainable development. The Programme of Action adopted by the Conference responds to the challenges that lie ahead of us. Similarly, the World Summit for Social Development, scheduled to take place in Copenhagen in March 1995, will offer an opportunity to the nations of the world to arrive at common ground on today's pressing issues, such as the social integration of disadvantaged and marginalized segments of the population and the eradication of poverty, especially in the developing countries. The Summit should also emphasize the need to improve the quality of life as an integrated approach to sustainable development, by incorporating health concerns in developmental strategies.

Similarly, we look forward to the holding of the World Conference on Women, in Beijing in September next year. It is our expectation that the Beijing Conference will culminate in the adoption of comprehensive strategies and policies in order to address pressing issues affecting women world wide.

It is regrettable to note that, four years after the holding of the World Summit for Children, the situation of children world-wide continues to be deplorable and a matter of concern. Amongst them, children in conflict situations deserve our special attention. My country is faced with an adverse environment for children, a legacy of 16 years of devastating war, which, among other things, broke up entire families and left many children orphans or deeply traumatized and without any kind of comfort or family warmth.

We therefore welcome resolution 48/157 of 20 December 1993 which, *inter alia*, requested the Secretary-General to appoint an expert to undertake a comprehensive study of the question of the protection of children affected by armed conflicts. We in Mozambique feel honoured by the Secretary-General's recent nomination of Mrs. Graça Machel to coordinate a working group on such a study.

Thirty years have now elapsed since Mozambique embarked on the search for independence and peace. It has been a long and difficult journey. Today we are at a crucial stage in the implementation of the General Peace Agreement for Mozambique and of the holding of multiparty general elections. On behalf of my Government, I would like to seize this occasion to reiterate our deepest appreciation to the international community for the solidarity and support it has extended to our people. It is our firm belief that we will continue to enjoy this support for the consolidation of peace, progress and prosperity in our country.

The meeting rose at 7.05 p.m.